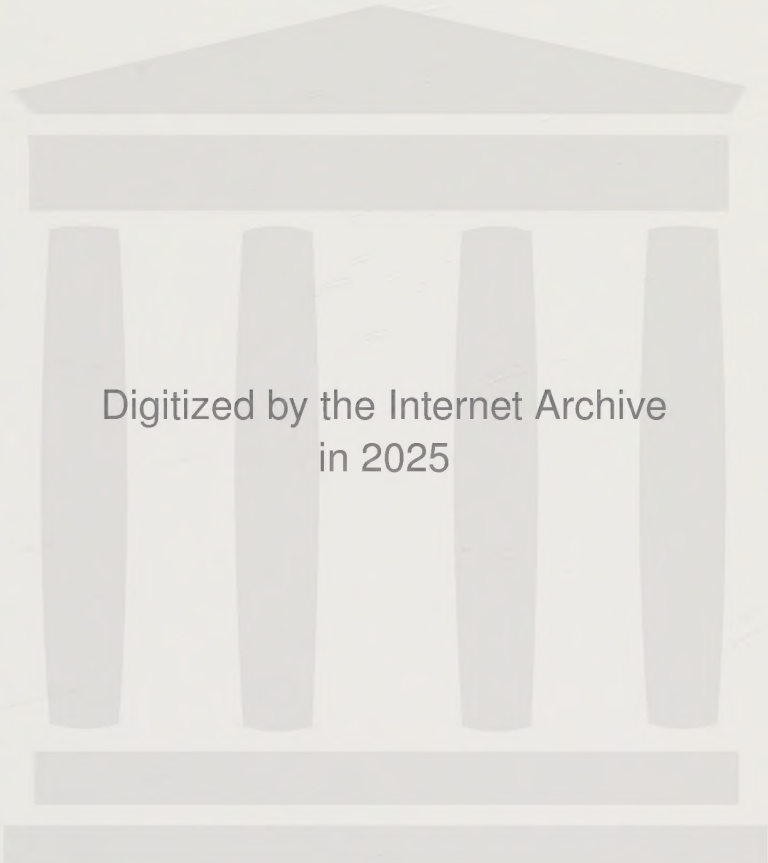
The Life of Christ

JESUS CHRIST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The Life of Christ

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THE

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OF

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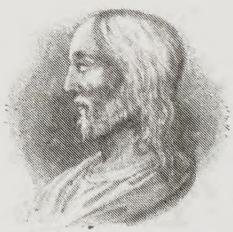


LONDON:

WILLIAM BALL AND Co. PATERNOSTER ROW.

1839.

PRINTED BY S. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET, FLEET ST.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

1. Adoration of the Shepherds . . . . . SPAGNOLETTO.
2. Annunciation and Crucifixion—(Ornamental Head-Piece) . . SARGEANT.
3. Nativity—(Initial Letter A) . . . . . SARGEANT.
4. John proclaiming the Messiah . . . . . OVERBECK.
5. Evangelist Matthew—(Head-piece) . . . . . SEGHERS.
6. Transfiguration . . . . . OVERBECK.
7. Evangelist Mark—(Head-piece) . . . . . SEGHERS.
8. Christ's public entry into Jerusalem . . . . . OVERBECK.
9. Evangelist Luke—(Head-piece) . . . . . SEGHERS.
10. Christ praying to the Father . . . . . GUIDO.
11. Evangelist John—(Head-piece) . . . . . GUIDO.
12. Resurrection of Christ . . . . . VANDYKE.
13. Angel—(Head-piece) . . . . . RAFFAELLE.
14. Ruins of an Ancient Jewish Tomb . . . . . CASSAS.

The head of Christ on the Wrapper, from a medal supposed to have been struck by the early Christians.—*See Walsh on Christian Coins.*

The Cuts Drawn and Engraved by STEPHEN SLY and ASSISTANTS.

PART II.

"THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST,"

will be published on the First of April, and each succeeding Part at intervals of two months.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS AND OF THE WISE MEN.

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.—1. *Tim.* iii. 16.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—*John* i. 14.
When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—*Heb.* i. 6.
The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising.—All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.—*Isaiah* lx. 3-6.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about

them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.—*Luke* ii. 4-20.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.—*Matt.* ii. 1, 2. 11.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

O Marvellous mystery! O inexplicable conjunction! O mercy most adorable; ever to be admired; ever to be loved! We were not worthy to be called thy servants; and thou hast made us sons—*sons of God!*—not only sons, but heirs too,—*heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Rom.* viii. 17. Whence is that mighty favour? Send down thy grace and Spirit, and let this qualify us to receive the fulness of thy mercy.

Help us to understand, and to consider with reverence, to contemplate, and with all diligence to walk worthy of this *mystery of godliness*,—this Son of *God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* —1 *Tim.* iii. 16. ST. AUGUSTINE.

The birth of the Lord was attended with circumstances of external indigence and meanness: but it was also marked with a dignity and majesty, far surpassing all the pomp of kings, and the splendour of palaces and retinues; and suited to pour contempt on all human grandeur. It was proper that so important an event should be announced with peculiar solemnity, and angels were the heralds of the new-born Saviour: but they were not sent to the rulers of the nation, or to the Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees: on the contrary, some poor, humble, industrious shepherds were favoured with the first tidings of Emmanuel's birth. These were spending the night, or part of it, in the field, keeping watch over their flocks, to defend them from robbers and beasts of prey; and probably there was a number of them who watched by turns. While they were thus employed, a holy angel suddenly appeared, and the "glory of the Lord," even of his manifested presence, surrounded them. This threw them into great consternation; but the angel encouraged them not to fear, for he was come to bring them good tidings, which should be the source of great and lasting joy to them and "to all people;" For *to them*, as men, as sinners, and as believers, was born on that day, at Bethlehem, a Saviour from wrath, Satan, sin, and death, who was indeed the promised and expected Messiah, Israel's anointed Prophet, Priest, and King; nay, "the Lord of glory," the Lord of all," "the Lord from Heaven," God manifest in the flesh." This great and invaluable blessing to mankind, this glorious new-born Prince and Saviour, they might find "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger:" and they might surely know him by this sign; for probably no other babe could be found at Bethlehem in so mean a situation. No sooner had the angel finished this address to the poor shepherds, than he was visibly joined by "a multitude of the heavenly host," or of the *angelic armies;* who, being filled with inexpressible admiration of the love of God, and the display of all his glorious perfections, in this surprising transaction, audibly celebrated his praises with triumphant acclamations, saying "Glory to God in the highest," &c. implying that this was the grand display of the Divine Glory.

When the angels had rendered their joyful adoration of God, and benevolent congratulations to men, on this most happy occasion, the vision disappeared: and the shepherds, conferring together on the wonders which they had witnessed, determined to go immediately to Bethlehem; where they were soon enabled to find Mary, Joseph, and the new-born Saviour, exactly in the situation which had been described. Having witnessed this instructive scene, they publicly reported the whole transaction, and the assurance given them that this child was "the Saviour," even "Christ the Lord." This excited the astonishment of all who heard it; but most of

them seem to have speedily forgotten it. Mary, however, carefully observed, and meditated on all these wonderful incidents, which were so suited to enlarge her expectations, and enliven her holy affections: and the shepherds returned to their humble employment, with joyful, thankful hearts, glorifying God. REV. T. SCOTT.

That the visitation might be answerable to the homeliness of the place, attendants, provision, who shall come to congratulate his birth, but poor shepherds. The kings of the earth rest at home, and have no summons to attend him by whom they reign. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. In an obscure time (the night), unto obscure men (shepherds), doth God manifest the light of his Son by glorious angels.

If these shepherds had been snoring in their beds, they had no more seen angels, nor heard news of their Saviour, than their neighbours: their vigilancy is honoured with this heavenly vision. Those, which are industrious in any calling, are capable of further blessings; whereas the idle are fit for nothing but temptation.

No less than a whole choir of angels are worthy to sing the hymn of *glory to God*, for the Incarnation of his Son: what joy is enough for us, whose nature he took, and whom he came to restore by his Incarnation? If we had the tongues of angels, we could not raise this note high enough, to the praise of our glorious Redeemer.

No sooner do the shepherds hear the news of a Saviour, than they run to Bethlehem to seek him. Those, that left their beds to tend their flocks, leave their flocks to inquire after their Saviour. No earthly thing is too dear to be forsaken for Christ. If we suffer any worldly occasion to stay us from Bethlehem, we care more for our sheep than our souls. It is not possible that a faithful heart should hear where Christ is, and not labour to see the sight, to the fruition of him. Where art thou, O Saviour, but in thine own house, in the assembly of thy saints? BISHOP HALL.

Angels are all ministering spirits: and, if they attend the heirs of salvation, how much more the Author of it! If they wait on the servants, how much more on the Son, who is Lord of all! When he bringeth his first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. He was seen of angels.

We have much reason to conclude that these shepherds were among the number of those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem. While many of their countrymen, in ceiled houses, were seeking their consolation in the world, they, like Simeon, were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Perhaps at this very moment, they were silently musing, or perhaps conversing with each other, (for they were obviously together,) "when the kingdom of God should come;" and sighing out the words of David, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be

glad." When, "Lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them! and the glory of the Lord shone round about them!"

And this angel, by his example, teaches us, however much we may be placed above them, not to overlook the poor, nor refuse to visit them, especially God's poor; for they are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him.

Instructed by the heavenly herald, the shepherds would have set off instantly in order to ascertain, and to report the fact announced by the angel of the Lord. But there suddenly descended a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men."

The coming of the Messiah was called, "The truth of God." Many things evince the Divine veracity; but this was the main pledge. It was the chief promise ever given to man. It was also the earliest assurance; it was given as early as the Fall. And what a length of time the assurance to hang in suspense; a year,—a hundred years,—a thousand years—another thousand and another, before the seed of the woman appeared! Hath He forgotten to be gracious? Doth his promise fail for evermore? But at the end of four thousand years, it was proclaimed, "His councils of old are faithfulness and truth." How many, also, were what we may call the minute parts of the promise. It was foretold that he should descend from a particular nation—the nation of the Jews: a particular tribe—the tribe of Judah: a particular family—the family of David: a particular mother—a virgin. On how many things does the veracity of God now depend, the failure of any one of which would prove him a liar. The place of his residence was foretold; it was Bethlehem. The prophecy had been recorded for ages, and was acknowledged at the time of his birth. But how many things were necessary to this, and how accidental seemed the fulfilment! For Joseph and Mary were residing at Nazareth. And had not Judea been under the Roman dominion, and had not Cæsar Augustus proudly wished to know the number and wealth of his subjects, and had Mary been delivered a few days sooner or later, he would have been born elsewhere, and the word of God would have been of none effect. All these occurrences appear casual, and they were so to the parties themselves, but not to God; he knows all his works from the beginning.

We see in the thing which has come to pass a wonderful combination. A combination of natures—I admit his humanity; and why should I question his Divinity? I find many things ascribed to him, which cannot belong to him as God; and I find others ascribed to him, which cannot pertain to him as man: and here is the solution of the difficulty, "God was manifest in the flesh." A combination of grandeur and abasement!

Even at the very festival, which is the commemoration of it, men will be found any where rather than at Bethlehem. They will be attracted to every thing, rather than to that sight, which the Shepherds left their flocks, and made haste to see, which the Eastern sages came such a vast distance to behold, and which drew all heaven down to earth. Let us call off our

attention from the little, debasing, vexing, defiling things of the world, and repair to the Infant of Bethlehem, the desire of all nations. Let us give him the glory which is due unto his Holy Name; and say, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Let us behold in him provision made for our recovery, the most suitable to our wants, and adequate to our relief, and placed entirely within our reach. Let us embrace him, and exclaim, "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." REV. W. JAY.

There was a prophecy of Balaam famous in all the Eastern country, and recorded by Moses, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel: out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." Which although in its first sense it signified David, who was the conqueror of the Moabites; yet, in its more mysterious and chiefly intended sense, it related to the Son of David. And in expectation of the event of this prophecy, the Arabians, the sons of Abraham by Keturah, whose portion, given by their patriarch, was gold, frankincense, and myrrh, who were great lovers of astronomy, did with diligence expect the revelation of a mighty prince in Judea, at such a time when a miraculous and extraordinary star should appear: and therefore, "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, there came wise men," inspired by God, taught by art, and persuaded by prophecy, "from the East to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

God, who is the universal Father of all men, at the nativity of the Messiah, gave notice of it to all the world, as they were represented by the grand division of Jews and Gentiles: to the Jewish shepherds by an angel; to the Eastern Magi by a star.

These Magi presented to the holy babe gold, frankincense, and myrrh, protesting their faith of three articles, by the symbolical oblation: by gold, that he was a King; by incense, that he was a God; by myrrh, that he was a man. And thus, in one view and two instances, God hath drawn all the world to himself by his son Jesus, in the instance of the shepherds and the Arabian Magi, Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; that in him, all nations, and all conditions, and all families, and all persons, might be blessed; having called all by one star or other, by natural reason or by the secrets of philosophy, by the revelations of the Gospel or by the ministry of angels, by the illuminations of the Spirit, or by the sermons and dictates of spiritual fathers; and hath consigned this lesson to us, that we must never "appear before the Lord empty," but if we cannot bring gold with the rich Arabians, we may with the poor shepherds come and "kiss the Son lest he be angry;" and in all cases come and "serve him with fear and reverence," and spiritual rejoicings. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

Let us observe, with pleasure, this further honour which God did to his only-begotten Son, in ordering a new star to appear, as the signal of his birth, and in calling these illustrious persons from afar, to pay their early adorations to him. No doubt they thought such a discovery as brought them to the feet of their infant Saviour, an ample recompense for all the fatigue and expense of such a journey. They were exceedingly transported when they saw the star. So let us rejoice in everything which may be a means of leading our souls to Christ, and disposing us to cast ourselves down before him with humility and resignation.

Let us look upon this circumstance of the sacred story as a beautiful emblem of that more glorious state of the Christian church, when the Gentiles shall come to its light, and sages and kings to the brightness of its rising; when the abundance of the sea shall be converted to it, and the wealth of the Gentiles shall be consecrated to its honour. "The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD."—*Isai.* lx. 3. 5, 6.

How wonderful was the honour conferred upon so obscure a town as Bethlehem, when it was made thus illustrious among the thousands of Judah! Happy they who consecrate not only gold and their other possessions, but also their souls and their bodies, to that Great Ruler, whose office it is to feed and govern the Israel of God; under whose conduct and care they shall receive blessings infinitely more valuable than all the treasures of the east or the west! DR. DODDRIDGE.

God does not leave unnoticed and unrewarded those who desire to discover his will, and comply with the suggestions of his Spirit upon their hearts. You observe how *the star which they had seen in the east*, appeared again to the wise men, as they pursued their search from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, *and went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.* This illustrates the way in which the "Spirit prevents us, that we may have a good will, and works with us when we have that good will." The star which advertised the strangers of the birth of Christ, is like the Spirit warning us, as we hear or read the word, that the same Jesus is the author of eternal life to all them that obey him. Are our hearts awakened by this truth? — do we desire to know him "of whom Moses and the prophets did write?" — do we desire more fully to understand "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance?"—Here again the star appears, and guides us on our way: "the eyes of our understanding" are gradually "enlightened;" and "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, gives unto us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." The Spirit does not leave us, till it has conducted us safely to the Son of God: as the star did not desert the wise men, *till it came and stood over where the young child was.* "The mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," is more and more unfolded to us, and its wonderful adaptation to the circumstances and wants of our state, is more and more perceived, till we

entirely and cordially receive him as "made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Has the Spirit done this for you? Is he thus leading you? Has he brought you to acknowledge Christ as the author of your salvation, by whom you "have access to the Father?"

The history gives us one more lesson of instruction. The wise men, *when they were come into the house, and saw the young child with Mary his mother, fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.* You must resemble them in this: you must offer him gifts; not once only, or when you first approach him; but constantly offer him, out of the treasure of your heart, the best gifts you have of active service and obedient love. These are the gifts which he requires, and this is the least return which you can pay—that the "life which you live in the flesh," you should "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved you, and gave himself for you."

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Eden, and offerings divine;
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gold would his favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration.
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor!

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid!
Star of the East the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

BISHOP HEBER.

JESUS HONOURED BY HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.—*Isaiah* xlii. 1.

Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.—*Isaiah* lii. 13.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

THEN cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, [praying—*Luke* iii. 21,] lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—*Matt.* iii. 13-17.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, no. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered

them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And I John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!—*John* i. 19-36.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Praise is ever valuable in proportion to the judgment and integrity of him who bestoweth it; and the panegyric is truly honourable, when the panegyrist is one who will not flatter, and who cannot be deceived. How then shall we raise our thoughts to conceive adequately of a person, whose encomium was spoken by the Son of God; and concerning whom, that Son of God declared, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist?"—*Matt.* xi. 11. After this declaration made by the master, the disciples cannot well be hyperbolical in their praises of John, as the great pattern of repentance; the relation of Christ; the friend of the Bridegroom; the herald of the King Immortal; the glory of the Saints; and the joy of the World! BISHOP HORNE.

John "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."—*Luke* i. 80. John was not brought up in the schools of the prophets, nor in the academies of the Jews, nor at the feet of any of their Rabbins and doctors; that it might appear he was not taught and sent of men, but of God. Nor did he dwell in any of the cities, or larger towns, but in deserts: partly that he might be fitted for that gravity and austerity of life he was to appear in, and that it might be clear he had no knowledge of, nor correspondence with Jesus. And in

this solitude he remained, till he appeared in his prophetic office, and showed himself to the people of Israel; to whom he came, preaching his doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, administering the ordinance of baptism, giving notice of the near approach of the Messiah, and pointing him out unto the people. DR. GILL.

When the Eastern monarchs travelled, harbingers went before to give notice that the King was upon the road, and likewise proper persons to prepare his way, and to remove obstacles. The prophet thus illustrates great things by small, and accommodates the language and usages of men to divine truth. Messiah is about to visit a wilderness world, and those parts of it which he blesses with his presence, shall become the garden of the Lord.

Among the Jews, the professing people of God, a way was prepared for Messiah by the ministry of his harbinger, John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, as had been foretold of him by the prophets, particularly by Malachi, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and proclaiming that the Saviour and his kingdom were at hand. When the ministry of John had thus previously disposed the minds of many for the reception of Messiah, and engaged the attention of the people at large, Messiah himself entered upon his public office, on the same scene, and among the same people. As he increased, John willingly decreased. This distinguished servant of God, having finished his work, was removed to a better world. REV. J. NEWTON.

John the Baptist's ministry consisted principally in preaching the law, to awaken and convince men of sin, to prepare them for the coming of Christ, and to comfort them, as the law is to prepare the heart for the entertainment of the gospel. A very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God attended John's ministry, and the effect of it was, that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were awakened and convinced. They went out to him, and submitted to his baptism, confessing their sins. John was the greatest of all the prophets who came before Christ.—*Matt.* xi. 11. "Among those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist," *i. e.* had a more honourable office. He was as the morning star, which is the harbinger of the approaching day, and forerunner of the rising sun. The other prophets were stars that gave light in the night; but those stars went out on the approach of the gospel day. Now the coming of Christ being very nigh, the morning star comes before him, the brightest of all the stars, as John the Baptist was, in the sense mentioned, the greatest of all the prophets. And when Christ came in his public ministry, the light of that morning star decreased too; as we see, when the sun rises, it diminishes the light of the morning star. So John the Baptist says of himself, "He must increase, but I must decrease."—*John* iii. 30. And soon after Christ began his public ministry, John the Baptist was put to death: as the morning star is visible a little while after the sun is risen, yet soon goes out.
PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

The Baptist had till this time, that is, about thirty years, lived in the wilderness under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, under the tuition of angels, in conversation with God, in great mortification, and disaffections to the world, his garments rugged and uneasy, his meat plain, necessary, and without variety, his employment prayers and devotion, his company wild beasts, in ordinary, in extraordinary, messengers from heaven. It was an excellent sweetness of religion that had entirely possessed the soul of John, that in so great reputation of sanctity, so mighty a concourse of people, such great multitudes of disciples and confidants, and such throngs of admirers, he was humble without mixture of vanity, and confirmed in his temper and piety against the strength of the most impetuous temptation. And he was tried to some purpose: for when he was tempted to confess himself to be the Christ, he refused it; or to be Elias, or to be accounted that prophet, he refused all such great appellatives, and confessed himself only to be a *voice*, the lowest of entities, whose being depends upon the speaker, just as himself did upon the pleasure of God receiving form and publication, and employment, wholly by the will of his Lord, in order to the manifestation of the Word Eternal.

Now that the full time was come, Jesus took leave of his mother and his trade, to begin his Father's work and the office prophetical, in order to the redemption of the world; and when "John was baptizing in Jordan, Jesus came to John to be baptized of him." The Baptist had never seen his face; but the Holy Ghost inspired John, and he knew him at his first arrival, and did him worship. And when Jesus desired to be baptized, John forbad him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But the holy Jesus, who came to "fulfil all righteousness," would receive that rite which his Father had instituted in order to the manifestation of his Son. For although he had a glimpse of his glory by the Spirit, yet John professed that he therefore came baptizing with water, "that Jesus might be manifested to Israel;" and it was also a sign given to the Baptist himself, that "on whomsoever he saw the Spirit descending and remaining," he is the person "that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

Therefore Jesus came to be baptized, and by this baptism became known to John, who, as before he gave to him an unqualified testimony, so now he pointed out the person in his sermons and discourses, and, by calling him the "Lamb of God," prophesied of his passion, and preached him to be the world's Redeemer, and the sacrifice for mankind.

As soon as John had performed his ministry, and "Jesus was baptized, he prayed, and the heavens were opened," and the air, clarified by a new and glorious light, "and the Holy Ghost, in the manner of a dove, alighted upon" his sacred head, and God the Father gave "a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This was the inauguration and proclamation of the Messiah, when he began to be the great prophet of the new covenant. And this was the greatest meeting that ever was upon earth, where the whole cabinet of the mysterious Trinity was opened and shown, as much as the capacities of

our present imperfections will permit; the second person in the veil of humanity; the third in the shape or with the motion of the dove; but as the first kept his primitive state, and, as to the Israelites, he gave notice by the way of caution, "Ye saw no shape, but ye heard a voice;" so now also God the Father gave testimony to his Holy Son, and appeared only in a voice without any visible representment.

BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

Among the peculiarities which distinguish the most perfect dispensation of revealed religion, was the fact that its Author and Finisher was introduced to his work of mercy to man by a special harbinger. No such preparation had Divine wisdom judged necessary to any preceding disclosure of truth or authority. This honour was reserved till God should "bring the First Begotten into the world."

This arrangement was a particular topic of prophecy; and that, not the Sovereign only, but his servant and herald likewise, was predicted. We have the words complete, and no one disputes their authenticity.—*Luke* i. 15, 17.—xliii.—lxxvi.

The Sovereign thus announced and introduced, is THE LORD GOD of Israel, THE MOST HIGH, THE LORD JEHOVAH of the prophets. Can honesty of interpretation require any more? Is not the obedience of faith, which is the characteristic of every real Christian, satisfied that the Christ, whom John proclaimed in the wilderness, is GOD JEHOVAH, THE MOST HIGH? The language of Elizabeth implies that she had so understood the prophecy of her husband; and that the same spirit of faith was given to her, by which she saw in the child to be born to Mary, him whom she owned as her Lord. Indeed, it is expressly recorded that, on this occasion, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."

The faithful herald proclaimed the dignity of his Lord and Master, not only by declaring that he was greater and mightier than himself, but by giving instances of the exertion of his power. John had baptized by the symbolical use of water: the Messiah was actually to confer the blessing thus signified, that Divine influence which would produce and nourish all piety and religion; "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Neither can the subsequent hesitation of John (*Matt.* xi. 3.) be admitted as any bar to our interpretation of the testimony which he was inspired to bear. We have no reason to think that he was raised above the current opinion of his countrymen, that the reign of the Messiah would be established with temporal authority and power, exercised for the vindication of the injured and the deliverance of the oppressed. But his message to Jesus may be justly regarded as the utterance of complaint and remonstrance, rather than of serious doubt: "If thou art indeed the Hope and Deliverer of Israel, why dost thou permit thine enemies to triumph? Why dost thou forsake thy faithful messenger, and leave him to pine in chains and misery?"

But in this very message of embarrassment and despondency, we find an important circumstance of reference to prophecy: "Art thou He that

should come,"—*the coming one?* Now this was a part of the descriptions of the Messiah occurring in the Old Testament: the Shiloh that should come,—God, who would come and save,—the Adonai Jehovah, who would come to feed his flock,—the Lord, who would suddenly come to his temple, the Angel of the covenant. The Messiah, in the estimation of John, was distinctively *the coming one;* but the prophetic passages which speak of the great expected advent, connect it with plain attributions of the names of Deity to that coming one. DR. J. P. SMITH.

Jesus came after John in order of time, but was immensely superior to him in dignity, authority, and excellency; insomuch that John was not worthy to loose or carry his sandals, or to perform the lowest menial service for him, who would baptize them "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." The descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, in the form of fiery tongues lighting on the apostles, with the effects produced on their minds and by their ministry, was a remarkable fulfilment of this prediction; yet *this* baptism "by the Holy Spirit and by fire" was vouchsafed comparatively to few of those who believed in Christ; but the language of John evidently denotes a general benefit.

All other persons whom John baptized "confessed their sins;" but Jesus went up straightway from the water:" And immediately while he was praying, "the heavens were opened," and the Holy Spirit "descended like a dove," the emblem of purity, gentleness, and love, "and lighted upon him," probably both in the form and with the hovering motion of a dove. This extraordinary appearance was seen by John as well as by our Lord; but it is not said that any of the people were present. This visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ, was token of his being endued with his sacred influences without measure, to qualify him, as man, for every part of his mediatorial work; and to be communicated to his people from him, as the head of the Church. At the same time a voice was heard from heaven, God the Father himself acknowledging Jesus as his beloved Son, in whose person and mediation he was satisfied. At the baptism of our Lord there was a manifestation of the three persons in the sacred Trinity, acting in their proper relations according to the economy of our redemption. The Father appointing and sealing the Son to be the Mediator; the Son solemnly accepting the designation, and entering upon his work; and the Holy Spirit descending on him, as through his mediation communicated to his people, to apply his salvation to their souls.

The most eminent saints have always been the most humble; they have had the most abasing thoughts of themselves, and the most exalted apprehensions of the glory and excellency of Christ; they have felt the need of his atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit more than others; and have thought the meanest place in his service too high and honourable for them.

Thus may we wait for the supply of the Spirit of Christ to make us fruitful in the works of righteousness, to evince our union with him, and to be in us "the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God," accepted in "his beloved Son, in whom he is

well pleased." But let us remember, that the Spirit of Christ resembles the gentle, loving dove, and not any fierce bird of prey: furious contests, therefore, cannot spring from his influence; nay, they banish him from our hearts and assemblies, they weaken the evidences of our adoption, and mar our comfort. "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and by abounding in these, we best glorify the God of our salvation, to whose service we were devoted, when "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," to whom be glory for evermore. Amen.

REV. T. SCOTT.

Observe, *The Spirit of God descended, and lighted on him.* In the beginning of the old world, *the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters* — *Gen.* i. 20.: so here, in the beginning of this new world, Christ, as God, needed not to receive the Holy Ghost, but it was foretold that *the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him* — *Isai.* lxi. 1, and here he did so: for 1. He was to be a prophet, and prophets always spoke by the Spirit of God, who came upon them: Christ was to execute his prophetic office, not by his Divine nature, (saith Dr. Whitby,) but by the afflatus of the Holy Spirit. 2. He was to be the head of the church, and the *Spirit descended upon him*, by him to be derived to all believers, in his gifts, graces, and comforts: Christ *received gifts for men*, that he might give *gifts to men.*

He *descended on him like a dove.* If there must be a bodily shape, (*Luke* iii. 22,) it must not be that of a man, for the being seen in *fashion as a man* was peculiar to the Second Person; none therefore more fit than the shape of one of the fowls of heaven, heaven being now opened; and of all fowl none so significant as the dove. 1. The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like spirit; not like *a silly dove without heart,* — (*Hos.* vii. 2,) but like an innocent dove without gall. *The Spirit descended,* not in the shape of an eagle, which is, though a royal bird, yet a bird of prey, but *in the shape of a dove,* than which no creature more harmless and inoffensive. Such was the Spirit of Christ, *he shall not strive, nor cry;* such must Christians be, *harmless as doves.* 2. The dove was the only fowl that was offered in sacrifice — *Lev.* i. 14.; and Christ by the Spirit, the eternal Spirit, *offered himself without spot to God.* 3. The tidings of the decrease of Noah's flood were brought by a dove, with an olive leaf in her mouth; fitly therefore are the glad tidings of peace with God brought by his Spirit *as a dove.*

REV. M. HENRY.

We behold a peculiar honour put upon Jesus at the conclusion of the ordinance. The solemnity was closed, but he remained in prayer; and immediately, while he looked up, the heavens were opened over his head, and the Spirit visibly descended upon him, resembling a dove, perhaps in shape, as well as its hovering motion. This was like an inauguration of the Saviour, when he was about to enter on his public work, and an intimation, that, as "the Anointed of God," he received the most extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost.

If we be solicitous to obtain for ourselves a testimony of the favour of heaven, let us learn from our Lord to expect it in answer to fervent prayer. And we may be the more emboldened to present our supplications in the name of Jesus, since, as we have seen, he is consecrated to, and accepted in, his mediatorial office. "The residue of the Spirit" is with him; for "he has received gifts for men." We may rejoice and triumph that the Father is well pleased in him, as our surety and Advocate.

REV. T. ROBINSON.

Let us remember in how distinguishing a sense Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God, to whom *the Father hath not given the Spirit by measure*, but hath poured it out upon him in the most abundant degree. Let us trace the workings of this Spirit in Jesus, not only as a Spirit of miraculous power, but of the richest grace and holiness; earnestly praying that this holy unction may, from Christ our head, descend upon our souls. May his enlivening Spirit kindle its sacred flame there, with such vigour, that many waters may not be able to quench it, nor floods of temptation and corruption to drown it.

Behold God's *beloved Son in whom he is well pleased!* As such let us honour and love him, and as such let our souls acquiesce in him, as in every respect such a Saviour as our wishes might have asked and our necessities required. With what amazement should we reflect upon it, that the blessed Jesus, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till his thirtieth year. That he deferred his ministry so long, should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations till we are qualified for them, and plainly discover a Divine call: that he deferred it no longer should be an engagement to us to avoid delays, and to give God the prime of our life.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

What really concerns us, is the importance here ascribed to the work of Redemption, in which all the three persons of the Trinity are interested and engaged. The Father "sends his only begotten Son, that all that believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." The Son consents; and has just set the first example to mankind, that "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The Holy Ghost descends visibly upon him, and intimates in what power he came, and what virtue might be expected to attend his ministry, and to establish his religion. And all this "for us men and for our salvation!" How great must be the value of the soul, in behalf of which so much was done!

We, who read the narrative, are the objects of this gracious interposition. Do we feel it as we ought? Strive daily to improve your sense of it, and exalt your gratitude by meditation and prayer. Contemplate the mercy of God, till his Spirit descends more and more upon you, and leaves his dove-like image upon your hearts, the emblem and characteristic of the religion of Christ, which is peace with God, and meekness towards men!

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.—*Deut.* xviii. 15.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.—2 *Pet.* i. 16-18.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, [to pray, *Luke* ix. 28.] and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them, [in glory—*Luke* ix. 31.] Moses and Elias, talking with him: [and who spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem—*Luke* ix. 31.] Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked

him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.—*Matt.* xvii. 1-13.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Jesus, thou Releaser of them that are in captivity; thou Restorer of them that are lost; thou Hope of them that are in exile; thou inexhaustible Source of all virtues and graces; thou eternal Son of the Father; thou "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead;" thou Life, by whose genial influence every living creature lives, and by the communication of whose rays it is, that thousands of millions of glorious spirits preserve the brightness shed by thee on them, and on the glittering hosts of heaven that stand around the throne of glory, shed abroad the cheering light of thy sevenfold grace over my heart! ARCHBISHOP ANSELM.

Behold here together the three greatest persons that ever were the ministers of heaven: Moses, under God, the institutor and promulgator of the law; Elias, the great reformer of it, when under its deepest degeneracy and corruption; and the blessed Jesus, the Son of God, who came to take away what was weak and imperfect, and to introduce a more rational institution, and to communicate the last revelation which God would make of his mind to the world. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.

There is not, in all divinity, a higher speculation than this of Christ transfigured. Suffer, me, therefore, to lead you up by the hand into Mount Tabor, for nearer to heaven ye cannot come, while ye are upon earth; that you may see him glorious upon earth, the region of his shame and abasement, who is now glorious in heaven, the throne of his Majesty.

All three evangelists accord that it was immediately after those words, *There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Son of Man come in his kingdom;* wherein, methinks, the act comments upon the words. Peter, James, and John, were these *some:* they tasted not of death, till they saw this heavenly image of the royalty of Christ glorified.

Behold how Christ entered upon all his great works with prayers in his mouth. When he was to enter into that great work of his humiliation in his Passion, he went into the garden to pray; when he is to enter into this great work of his exaltation in his transfiguring, he went up into the mountain to pray: he was taken up from his knees to both. He had eternally possessed the glory of his Father without any witnesses; in time the angels were blessed with that sight; and, after that, two bodily, yet heavenly,

witnesses were allowed, Enoch and Elias: now in his humanity he was invested with glory, he takes but three witnesses, and those earthly and weak, Peter, James, and John.

These were the attendants; see the companions of Christ. As our glory is not consummate without society, no more would Christ have his; therefore his Transfiguration hath two companions, Moses and Elias. Heaven could not give two fitter companions, more admirable to the Jews for their miracles, more gracious with God for their faith and holiness: both of them admitted to the conference with God in Horeb; both of them types of Christ; both of them fasted forty days; both of them for the glory of God suffered many perils; both divided the waters; both the messengers of God to kings; both of them marvellous, as in their life so in their end.

Doubtless many thousand angels saw this sight, and were not seen; these two both saw and were seen. Oh, how great a happiness was it for these two great prophets, in their glorified flesh, to see their glorified Saviour, who before his Incarnation had spoken to them! — to speak to that Man of God, of whom they were glorified, and to become prophets, not to men, but to God!

Before, the disciples' eyes were dazzled with glory; now, the brightness of that glory is shaded with a *cloud*. Suddenly they hear a voice sounding out of that cloud, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him*. They need not be told whose that voice was; the place, the matter evinced it. No angel in heaven could or durst have said so. How gladly doth Peter afterwards recount it! *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.*

Twice hath God spoken these words to his own Son from Heaven: once, in his Baptism; and now again, in his Transfiguration. Here not without some oppositive comparison; not Moses, not Elias, but *this*, Moses and Elias were servants, this a *Son:* Moses and Elias were sons, but of grace and choice; this is *that Son*, the Son by nature. Other sons are *beloved*, as of favour and free election; this is *The Beloved*, as in the unity of his essence.

This one voice proclaims Christ, at once the Son of God, the Reconciler of the World, the Doctor and Lawgiver of his Church. As the Son of God, he is essentially interested in his love; as he is the Reconciler of the World in whom God is well pleased, he doth most justly challenge our love and adherence; as he is the Doctor and Lawgiver, he doth justly challenge our audience, our obedience. Even so, Lord, teach us to hear and obey thee, as our Teacher; to love thee, and believe in thee, as our Reconciler; and as the eternal Son of thy Father, to adore thee.

The light caused wonder in the disciples; but the voice, astonishment. They are all fallen down upon their faces. Who can blame a mortal man to be thus affected with the voice of his Maker?

They looking up, saw no man, save Jesus alone; and that, doubtless, in his wonted form. All were now gone; Moses, Elias, the cloud, the voice, the glory, — Moses and Elias are gone; only Christ is left. The glory of

the law and prophets was but temporary, yea momentary; that only Christ may remain to us entire and conspicuous. Neither could these raised disciples find any miss of Moses and Elias, when they had Christ still with them. Had Jesus been gone, and left either Moses or Elias, or both, in the mount with his disciples, that presence, though glorious, could not have comforted them: now that they are gone, and he is left, they cannot be capable of discomfort. O Saviour, it matters not who is away, while thou art with us! Thou art God All-sufficient: what can we want when we want not thee? BISHOP HALL.

How glorious and delightful was this view of our blessed Redeemer, which the apostles had when he was transfigured before them, clothed, as it were, with the Divine Shechinah, and shining with a lustre like that of the sun! How pleasing and how edifying must it be to them to see with him Moses and Elijah, those two eminent saints, who had so many ages ago quitted our world, but whose names they had often read in the sacred records with wonder and reverence.

Well might Peter say, *It is good for us to be here!* Well might he be contented to resign his entertainments and his hopes elsewhere, that they might prolong these delightful moments, feasting their eyes with these divine visions, and their minds with these more than human discourses. Nor can we wonder that the scene, transitory as it was, left so abiding a savour on his spirits, that in an epistle which he wrote many years after, and but a little before his death, he should single this story from a thousand others to attest it as he does, and to argue from it. (See 2 Pet. i. 16-18.) But oh! how much more desirable is it to stand upon Mount Zion, and to behold those brighter glories which our Jesus wears in the heavenly regions! To behold, not merely Moses and Elijah, but all the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs; and, in a word, all the saints of God in every age, whether to us personally known or unknown, surrounding him in a radiant circle; and not only to behold them, but to converse with them. Lord, it is good for us to be there, in our desires at least, and in our meditations, till thou pleasest to call us to that happy world, where no drowsiness will cloud our eyes, where no hurry will discompose our thoughts, but where the perfection of holiness and of love shall cast out every degree of terror, as well as of sorrow.

In the mean time, let us reverently attend to that Saviour who appeared in this majestic form, and who comes recommended to us with so many testimonials of his Divine authority. He was again declared, by a voice from heaven, to be the beloved Son of God: as such let us hear him, receiving all his revelations with the assurance of faith, and all his commands with the obedience of love. If these sentiments govern our hearts and our lives, the thoughts of that departure from this world which we are shortly to accomplish, will be no grief or terror to our souls. Like our blessed Master, we may connect the views of it, and intermix discourse upon it, with the most delightful enjoyments and converse; nay, it will serve to render them yet more pleasing. For who would not long to be

made conformable to Christ, even in his sufferings and death, if it may be a means of transforming us into the resemblance of his glories?

DR. DODDRIDGE.

"This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." Here we have the great gospel-mystery revealed: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the very same that was spoken from heaven at his baptism: — *Matt.* iii. 7. — and it was the best news that ever came from heaven to earth since man sinned. It is to the same purport with that great doctrine, 2 *Cor.* v. 19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Moses and Elias were great men, and favourites of heaven, yet they were but servants, and servants that God was not always well pleased in: for Moses spake unadvisedly, and Elias was a man subject to passions: but Christ is *a Son*, and in him God was always well pleased. Moses and Elias were sometimes instruments of reconciliation between God and Israel. Moses was a great intercessor, and Elias a great reformer: but in Christ, God is reconciling the world: his intercession is more prevalent than that of Moses, and his reformation more effectual than that of Elias.

The great gospel duty required, and it is the condition of our benefit by Christ: "Hear ye him." God is well pleased with none in Christ, but those who hear him. We must hear him, as the great Prophet and Teacher; hear him and be ruled by him, as the great Prince and Lawgiver. God does here, as it were, turn us over to Christ for all the revelations of his mind: and it refers to that prediction concerning the "Prophet God would raise up like unto Moses."—*Deut.* xviii. 18.

Moses and Elias were now with him, the law and the prophets: hitherto it was said, "Hear them." — *Luke* xvi. 29. The disciples were ready to equal them with Christ, when they must have tabernacles for them as well as for him. "No," saith God, "hear Him," and that is enough: Him, and not Moses and Elias: they were willing to see all their interest transferred to Christ, that "in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Be not troubled that Moses and Elias make so short a stay with you; hear Christ, and you will not want them.

Christ gave the disciples charge to keep the vision very private for the present. "Tell it no man till the Son of Man is risen." If they had proclaimed it, the credibility of it would have been shocked by his sufferings. Christ observed a method in the manifestation of himself: would have his works put together, mutually to explain and illustrate each other, that they might appear in their full strength and convincing evidence. Every thing is beautiful in its season. Christ's resurrection was properly the beginning of the gospel state and kingdom, to which all before was but preparatory and by way of preface. REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

Our Lord took those three whom he honoured with peculiar regard, and "brought them up into a high mountain apart," and manifested to them his glory, the glory which he had with his Father, before the world was.

A simple account of what could not be adequately described. Nothing on earth, nothing seen by mortal eyes, can equal the brightness.

How wonderful and how inspiring is the thought, that this brightness, this glory, is prepared for those who here belong to Christ Jesus! Paul assures us, that He "shall raise our vile body, that it may be made like unto his glorious body." Christ was "made flesh," as ourselves: he bore the body of earth. We bear the image of the earthy: but on the mount where this wonderful transfiguration took place, Christ put on the appearance of "incorruption," of "glory," of "power:" the glory and power of the celestial body. So likewise will his true and faithful disciples.

We may unite with the apostle in these words, "It is good for us to be here:" to be where he was, and where he wished to remain, in the company of Christ Jesus, and of Elias, and of Moses. We are with Moses and Elias while we walk, as they walked, in all the ordinances and commandments of the law blameless. We are with Christ Jesus while we abide in his faith. He is one with us, and we with him. He has said, "If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The interpreters of the law were right in expecting, that one typified under the title of Elijah, (see *Mal.* iii. 1.; iv. 5.) "a burning and shining light in a dark age and country," should precede the coming of the great Deliverer. But they had not perceived that this prophecy was already accomplished in the ministry of John the Baptist. He had "restored all things;" that is, he had established them in the state in which they must needs be when Christ appeared; he had called men to repentance, the first step towards restoration, and awakened the hearts of those who had ears to hear.

But the error of the apostles reminds us how much of the meaning of Scripture, how much of its spiritual force, how much of its personal application, may be unperceived, unless, through the grace of its Divine Author, it is brought home to our minds. May he so "open our eyes," that we may see the wondrous things of his law! BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

The apostle Peter, adverting to this memorable occurrence, says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." — 2 *Pet.* i. 16-18. This event is to be considered: 1. As a solemn confirmation of the prophetic office of Christ. 2. As designed to support the faith of the disciples, which was to be deeply tried by his approaching humiliations; and to afford consolation to the human nature of our Lord himself, by giving him a foretaste of "the joy set before him." 3. As an emblem of humanity glorified at the resurrection. 4. As declaring Christ

to be superior to Moses and Elias, the giver and restorer of the law. 5. As an evidence to the disciples of the existence of a separate state, in which good men consciously enjoy the felicity of heaven. 6. As a proof that the bodies of good men shall be so refined and changed, as, like Elias, to live in a state of immortality, and in the presence of God. 7. As exhibiting the sympathy which exists between the church in heaven and the church on earth, and the instruction which the former receives from the events which take place in the latter: Moses and Elias conversed with our Lord on his approaching death, doubtless to receive, not to convey information. 8. As maintaining the grand distinction, the infinite difference, between Christ and all other prophets: he is "THE SON." "*This is my beloved Son, hear him.*" It has been observed, with much truth, that the condition in which Jesus Christ appeared among men, humble, weak, poor, and despised, was a true and continual transfiguration; whereas, the transfiguration itself, in which he showed himself in the real splendour of his glory, was his true and natural condition.

REV. RICHARD WATSON.

Jesus had (in the conversation mentioned in the preceding chapter) told his disciples, that the Son of Man should come *in the glory of his Father*, with his holy angels, to judge the world. The scene on the mount therefore, *which so soon followed that conversation*, was probably meant to convey to them some idea and some evidence of his coming in glory at the great day of judgment, of which his transfiguration was, perhaps, as just a picture and exemplification as human sight could bear.

It is, indeed, described in nearly the same terms that St. John, in the Revelation, applies to the Son of man in his *state of glory* in heaven. "He was clothed (says he) with a garment down to the foot. His head and his hair were white like wool, white as snow; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." It is remarkable that St. Luke calls his appearance, after being transfigured, his glory. St. John, who was likewise present at this appearance, gives it the same name. "We beheld *his glory*, as of the only begotten of the Father." And St. Peter, who was another witness to this transaction on the mount, refers to it by a similar expression. "For he received (says that Apostle) from God the Father, *honour and glory*, when there came to him such a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There can hardly therefore remain any doubt, but that *the glory which Christ received from the Father*, on the mountain, was meant to be a representation of his coming in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, at the end of the world; which is one of the topics touched upon in the preceding chapter.

Another thing there mentioned was, *our Saviour's resurrection*. Of this, indeed, there is no direct symbol in the transfiguration; but it is evidently implied in that transaction; because Jesus is there represented in his glorified, celestial state, which being in the natural order of time subsequent to the resurrection, that event must naturally be supposed to have previously taken place.

The glory of Christ therefore on the mountain, was a symbol of his exaltation to be the judge of the earth; and the *glory of Moses and Elias* was an emblem of the rewards given to the righteous in heaven.

The other great purpose of the action on the mount was, I apprehend, to signify, in a figurative manner, *the* cessation of the Jewish, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation. BISHOP PORTEUS.

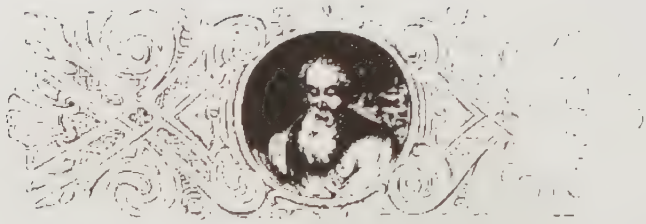
Jesus chose Peter, James, and John, that they might be witnesses of his Transfiguration: two or three witnesses being required by the Scripture to substantiate any fact. That fulness of the Godhead, which dwelt bodily in Christ, now shone forth through the human nature, and manifested to his disciples, not only the Divinity which Peter had before confessed,—*Matt.* xvi. 16, but also the glorious resurrection body, in which they should exist in the presence of God to eternity.

Elijah came from heaven in the same body which he had upon earth, for he was *translated*, and did not see death—2 *Kings* ii. 11. And the body of Moses was probably raised again, as a pledge of the *resurrection*. Both their bodies exhibit the same appearance, to show that the bodies of glorified saints are the same, whether the person had been *translated*, or had *died*. It was a prevalent tradition among the Jews, that both Moses and Elijah should appear in the times of the Messiah.

We may conceive that the *Law* in the person of *Moses*, the great Jewish legislator, and the *Prophets* in the person of *Elijah*, the chief of the prophets, came now to do homage to Jesus Christ, and to render up their authority into his hands: as he was the END of the Law, and the grand *subject* of the predictions of the prophets. This appears more particularly from what Luke says, (chap. ix. 31,) that *Moses* and *Elijah* conversed with our Lord on his *death*, which he was about to *accomplish*, because in it, all the *rites*, *ceremonies*, and *sacrifices* of the Law, as well as the *predictions* of the prophets, were *fulfilled*.

Tell the vision to no man. Observe, that as this Transfiguration was intended to show forth the final abolition of the whole Ceremonial Law, it was necessary that a matter which could not fail to irritate the Jewish rulers and people should be kept secret, till Jesus had accomplished vision and prophecy by his death and resurrection.

The whole of this emblematic transaction appears to me to be intended to prove, 1st. The *reality* of the *world* of *spirits*, and the *immortality* of the *soul*. 2dly. The *resurrection* of the body, and the doctrine of *future rewards* and *punishments*.—See chap. xvi. 27. 3dly. The *abolition* of the Mosaic institutions, and the *fulfilment* of the *predictions* of the *prophets* relative to the *person*, *nature*, *sufferings*, *death*, and *resurrection* of Christ, and the *glory* that should *follow*. 4thly. The establishment of the mild, light-bringing, and *life-giving* Gospel of the Son of God. And 5thly. That as the Old Jewish Covenant and Mediatorship had ended, Jesus was now to be considered as the sole *Teacher*, the only availing *offering* for *sin*, and the grand *Mediator* between God and man. DR. A. CLARKE.



JESUS PROCLAIMED AS THE KING MESSIAH AT JERUSALEM.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. — *Zech.* ix. 9.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way. —*Matt.* xxi. 8.

Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord! The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bear record. For this cause the people

also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. — *John* xii. 12, 13. 17, 18.

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! — *Matt.* xxi. 9.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee; and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.—*Luke* xix. 41. 44.

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple; and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. And when the chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.—*Matt.* xxi. 10-16.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Exult, daughter of Zion; shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.
Righteous and triumphant is He;
Lowly and riding upon an ass.
Even upon a colt, the foal of a she-ass.—*Zech.* ix. 9.

The Messiah is displayed as a sovereign triumphing and widely reigning: but his triumphs are not those of force and violence; he comes not upon the terrible war-horse; his path is not marked with tears and blood. His are the victories of truth, and holiness, and beneficence; the conquests of reason and conscience; the reign of holiness and piety, of good-will and pardoning grace to men, and the highest glory to God; abolishing war, cruelty, and tyranny, and establishing peace upon the best foundation, in the delightful period when his religion shall have that universality of extent, and shall receive that cordiality of obedience, which are here foretold. This great happiness, to be enjoyed under the Messiah's reign, is pictured by the imagery of the richest plenty in the produce of Judæa, affording abundantly the enjoyments of affluence to all classes. Such imagery is frequently employed in the style of prophecy, as the emblem of the individual and social happiness which true religion will effect, where its precepts are faithfully observed. It is especially predicted that these triumphs of the Messiah shall be first and principally in the nations of Europe; that the pride of Grecian philosophy, and the power of the Roman military domination, the guilty fascinations of the temples, and the consequent licentiousness of the people, the impostures of their priests, and the madness of their rulers, should fall in the strife with the crucified Galilæan and his despised disciples, meek and lowly of heart, with the weapons of a warfare not carnal, by weak things subduing the mighty, and by things deemed foolish, confounding the worldly wise. DR. J. P. SMITH.

The association of ideas in the prophet appears to have been to this purport. In contrast with the warlike Alexander, who had been so considerable a benefactor to the Jews, [and of whom Michaelis interprets the preceding connexion,] a much greater King is brought to view, whom Zion has to expect in later times. *Gentle, and riding upon an ass.* The meaning of which might have occurred to any one, previously to the accomplishment of the prediction, would be a mild and pacific King, who is on that account represented as riding, not upon a war-horse, but upon an ass. This interpretation is confirmed by the following verse, in which God declares that he will abolish the war-cavalry in Jerusalem. It would not have been readily inferred beforehand, from these words, that the promised King would literally make his entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass: yet this really took place in Jesus. PROFESSOR J. D. MICHAELIS.

Among the things written in the prophets, and relating to "him who shall come," were the words of Zechariah which were thus fulfilled. The accomplishment of the prophecy gave to the people a last opportunity of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah;—a last opportunity, for this took place on the first day of the week of the crucifixion. The Jew who was reasonable and dispassionate, should have been led by what he saw and heard to consult his Scriptures, and compare them with the facts which were taking place before his eyes, and so learn that this was indeed "he who should redeem Israel." But the veil of prejudice was so closely drawn, that see-

ing, they saw not; and hearing, they did not understand: and God, who does all things well, saw no reason why the "veil should be taken away."

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

Sion's King comes to Sion, and the "daughter of Sion" was told of his coming long before: yet he is not attended by the gentlemen of the country, nor met by the magistrates of the city in their formalities. His attendants were, however, "a very great multitude:" they were the common people that graced the solemnity of Christ's triumph, and none but they. Observe, Christ is honoured by the multitude, more than by the magnificence of his followers: for he values men by their *souls*, not by their preferments, names, or titles of honour. REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

Jesus went, not like a temporal prince to the palace, but like the Lord of the temple to his own house, to exercise his authority there. And when he came to the outward court, the court of the *Gentiles*, he found a great number of traders; some paying off bills of return from distant countries, for money to buy sacrifices, and changing money into half shekels, which every one of twenty years old and upwards was to give, as an offering to the Lord. — *Exod.* xxx. 13, 14. And he found others buying and selling doves and cattle for sacrifices, under a pretence of its subservience to sanctuary-work, and of convenience to those that came from far, and could not easily bring such things along with them. But when he saw that this traffic, which ought, and formerly used, to be carried on in the markets of Jerusalem, was introduced, by the avarice of the priests, into the place which was consecrated to the immediate service of God, and that it was managed with extortion, he threw down the stalls of the money-changers, and of the sellers of doves, and the like, and turned them all out, saying, "This place was designed, not for a market, but for the religious use of *Gentile* proselytes, who might not be admitted into the inner court of the temple, to worship, and offer up their prayers to the God of Israel, according as it is written, — *Isai.* lvi. 7, — *My house shall be called an house of prayer to all people*, or nations: but ye have horribly perverted its use, and profaned it, by your covetous merchandize; ye have thereby robbed God of his honour, and made an unlawful gain of the people, which is no better than theft; and so, according to an antient complaint of the prophet, —*Jer.* vii. 11,—*ye have turned it into a den* or receptacle *of thieves*." And such was the Divine Majesty and authority of his behaviour on this occasion, that, notwithstanding all the interest of the priests among the people, and all the gain which many had by this merchandize, their spirits were so over-awed, that none dared to oppose him!

What a wonderful conjunction of divine, human, and office-characters, do we meet with in Christ! Behold the GOD, in his perfect knowledge beforehand of every minute circumstance of things, and of the freest actions of men! in his command over their minds, and acting, like the Lord of his temple, to reform abuses there, and that without resistance from those, whose authority, inclinations, and interests, lay strongly against it; and in

his healing diseases, and drying up the barren fig-tree at his pleasure! Behold the MAN, in his being hungry! And behold the MESSIAH, in his riding on the ass's colt, amidst the loud Hosannas of the people, in his opening the eyes of the blind, in making the lame to walk, and in his being refused by the Jewish builders, according to ancient prophecies! And yet how different were people's thoughts about him!—the SAVIOUR of ISRAEL! What are all pretences to religion, if the life contradict them? O how afraid should we be of a barren profession, or of stumbling at Christ!

DR. GUISE.

O Saviour! whether shall I more wonder at thy majesty or thy humility?—that Divine Majesty, which lay hid under so humble an appearance; or that sincere humility, which veiled so great a glory? Thou, O Lord, whose "chariots are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," wouldst make choice of the silliest of beasts to carry thee in thy last and royal progress. How well is thy birth suited with thy triumph! Even that very ass, whereon thou didst ride, was prophesied of; neither couldst thou have made up those vatical predictions without this conveyance. O glorious and yet homely pomp!

Thou wouldst not lose aught of thy right; thou that wast a King, wouldst be proclaimed so: but, that it might appear thy kingdom was not of this world, thou, that couldst have commanded all worldly magnificence, thoughtest fit to abandon it. Instead of the Kings of the earth, who, reigning by thee, might have been employed in thine attendance, the people are thy heralds. How gladly did they spend their breath in acclaiming thee! "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Where now are the great masters of the synagogue, that had enacted the ejection of whosoever should confess Jesus to be the Christ? Lo, here, bold and undaunted clients of the Messiah, that dare proclaim him in the public road, in the open streets! In spite of all Jewish malignity, his kingdom is confessed, applauded, blessed. "O thou fairer than the children of men, in thy Majesty ride on prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things!"

In this princely, and yet poor and despicable pomp, doth our Saviour enter the famous city of Jerusalem,—Jerusalem, noted of old for the seat of kings, priests, and prophets: of kings, for there was the throne of David; of priests, for there was the temple; of prophets, for there they delivered their errands, and left their blood. Thither would Jesus come, as a King, as a Priest, as a Prophet: acclaimed as a King; teaching the people, and foretelling the woeful devastation of it, as a Prophet; and, as a Priest, taking possession of his temple, and vindicating it from the foul profanations of Jewish sacrilege.

Oft before had he come to Jerusalem, without any remarkable change, because without any semblance of state; now, that he gives some little glimpse of his royalty, "the whole city was moved." When the sages of

the East brought the first news of the "King of the Jews, Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;" and now that the King of the Jews comes himself, though in so mean a port, there is a new commotion, all saying, "Who is this?"

"Who is this?" Ask Moses, and he shall tell you, "The Seed of the woman" that "shall break the Serpent's head." Ask our father Jacob, and he shall tell you, "the Shiloh of the tribe of Judah." Ask David, and he shall tell you, "the King of Glory." Ask Isaiah, he shall tell you, "Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Ask Jeremiah, and he shall tell you, "the Righteous Branch." Ask Daniel, he shall tell you, "The Messiah." Ask John the Baptist, he shall tell you, "The Lamb of God." If you ask the God of the prophets, he hath told you, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Yea, if all these be too good for you to consult with, the devils themselves have been forced to say, "I know who thou art, even that Holy One of God." On no side, hath Christ left himself without a testimony; and, accordingly, the multitude here have their answer ready, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee."

Ye undervalue your Master, O ye well-meaning followers of Christ. "A Prophet? yea, more than a prophet!" John Baptist was so; yet was but the harbinger of this Messiah! This was that God, by whom the prophets were both sent and inspired. "Of Nazareth!" say you? Ye mistake him: Bethlehem was the place of his birth, the proof of his tribe, the evidence of his Messiahship! But oh, the wonderful hand of God, in the carriage of this whole business! The people proclaimed Christ first a King; and now they proclaim him a Prophet. Why did not the Roman bands run into arms, upon the one? Why did not the Scribes and Pharisees and the envious priesthood mutiny, upon the other? They had made decrees against him; they had laid wait for him; yet now he passes in state through their streets, acclaimed both a King and Prophet, without their reluctation. What can we impute this unto, but to the powerful and overruling arm of his Godhead? He that restrained the rage of Herod and his courtiers upon the first news of a King born, now restrains all the opposite powers of Jerusalem from lifting up a finger against this last and public avouchment of the Regal and Prophetical office of Christ.

BISHOP HALL.

We have here a compassionate lamentation in the midst of a solemn triumph. Our Lord's approach unto Jerusalem at this time carried some face of royal pomp, and some glimmerings only of that excellent Majesty, which both his Sonship and his Mediatorship entitled him unto. How little he was taken with this piece of state, is sufficiently seen: his mind is much more taken up in the foresight of Jerusalem's sad case; and therefore being come within view of it, in the descent of Mount Olivet, he beheld the city, and, it is said, "wept over it." Two things concur to make up the cause of this sorrow: the greatness of the calamity: Jerusalem, once so dear to God, was to suffer, not a scar, but a ruin; and the lost opportunity of preventing it.

His large and comprehensive mind could take the compass of this sad case. Our thoughts cannot reach far, yet we can consider Jerusalem as the city of the great King, where were the palace and throne of the Majesty of heaven, vouchsafing to "dwell with man on earth." Here the Divine light and glory had long shone: here was the sacred Shechinah, the dwelling place of the Most High, the symbols of his presence, the seat of his worship, the mercy seat, the place of receiving addresses, and of dispensing favours; "The house of prayer for all nations." To his own people this was the city of their solemnities, "whither the tribes were wont to go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD." He that was so great a lover of the souls of men, how grateful and dear to his heart had the place been where, through the succession of many by-past ages, the great God did use to unfold his kind propensions towards sinners, to hold solemn treaties with them, to make himself known, to draw and allure souls into his own holy worship and acquaintance!

The opportunity of prevention was quite lost. Had Israel received him, O how joyful a place Jerusalem would have been! How glorious had the triumphs of the love of God been there, had they repented, believed, obeyed! These were the "things that belonged to their peace:" this was their opportunity, their "day of visitation!"

"If thou hadst known!" O that thou hadst known! I wish thou hadst. His sorrow must have been proportionable to his love. They that were anciently so over-officious as to rase those words, "and wept over it," out of the canon, as thinking it unworthy so divine a person to shed tears, did greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, which elsewhere speak of our Lord's weeping, nor the power of Divine love, now become incarnate, nor indeed the true perfections and properties of human nature: otherwise they had never taken upon them to reform the gospel, and reduce not only Christianity, but Christ himself, to the measures and square of their stoical philosophy.

Whatever of tender compassions might be expected from the most perfect humanity and benignity, could not be wanting in him, upon the foresight of such a calamity as was coming upon that place and people. But yet, what was the sacking of a city, the destroying of pompous buildings that were all of a perishable material, the mangling of human flesh, over which the worm was otherwise shortly to have dominion, to the alienation of men's minds from God, their disaffection to the only means of their recovery and reconciliation to him, and their subjection to his wrath and curse for ever!

Shall not the Redeemer's tears move thee? Consider what these tears import. They drop from an intellectual and most comprehensive eye, that sees far, and pierces deep into things. The Son of God did not weep vain and causeless tears: he knows the value of souls, the weight of guilt, and how low it will press and sink them; the severity of God's justice, and the power of his anger. They signify the sincerity of his love and pity, the truth and tenderness of his compassion. And remember that he who shed

tears, did, from the same fountain of love and mercy, shed blood too! Thou makest thyself some very considerable thing, indeed, if thou thinkest the Son of God counted it worth his while to weep, and bleed, and die, to deceive thee into a false esteem of him and his love. But if his tears were sincere and inartificial, the natural genuine expressions of undissembled benignity and pity, consider that if thou perishest through sinning, it is under such guilt as the devils themselves are not liable to, who never had a Redeemer bleeding for them, nor weeping over them!

REV. JOHN HOWE.

"And a superscription also was writtten over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, 'THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.'"

Consider the character or description of Christ contained in that writing. He is described by his kingly dignity, "This is the King of the Jews." The very office, which but a little before they had reproached and derided, bowing the knee to him in mockery, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" the providence of God so orders it, that therein he shall be vindicated and honoured. "This is the King of the Jews;" or, as the other evangelists complete it, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Moreover it was a *predicting* and *presaging* title, evidently foreshowing the propagation of Christ's kingdom, and the spreading of his name and glory among all kindreds, nations, tongues, and languages; and that Greeks, Hebrews, and Latins should be called to the knowledge of him. Nor is it a wonder that this should be predicted by wicked Pilate, when Caiaphas himself, a man every way as wicked as he, had prophesied to the same purpose; for, "being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.—*John* xi. 51-52.

The Jews endeavoured, but could not persuade Pilate to alter it. To all their importunities he returns this resolute answer, "What I have written, I have written;" as if he should say, "Urge me no more; I have written his title; I cannot, I will not alter a letter thereof." Surely the constancy of Pilate at this time can be attributed to nothing but Divine special Providence. Most wonderful! that he, who before was as inconstant as a reed shaken by the wind, is now as fixed as a pillar of brass. And yet more wonderful, that he should write down that very particular in the title of Christ, "This is the King of the Jews," which was the very thing that so scared him but a little before, and was the very consideration that moved him to give sentence. What was now become of the fear of Cæsar? that Pilate dares to be Christ's herald, and publicly to proclaim him, "The King of the Jews." Pilate was far enough from designing that which the wisdom of Providence aimed at in this matter. He was a wicked man, and had no love to Christ: but it overruled his pen thus to write a fair and public testimony of the kingly office of the Son of God!

REV. J. FLAVEL.

MESSIAH GLORIFIED AS THE REDEEMER OF THE GENTILES.

And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.—*Gen.* xxii. 18.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.—*Gen.* xlix. 10.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.—*Gal.* iii. 13-14.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the feast: the same came to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this

world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. (This he said, signifying what death he should die.) The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. — *John* xii. 20-36.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Christ is, in Genesis, Abraham's seed; in David's Psalms and the Prophets, the Messiah and Redeemer of the world. Observe, the antiquity of the gospel is made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets. It was of ancient date as any prophecy: the first prophecy was nothing else but a gospel-charter: it was not made at the incarnation of Christ, but made manifest. It then rose up to its meridian lustre, and sprung out of the clouds, wherewith it was before obscured. The gospel was preached to the ancients by the prophets, as well as to the Gentiles by the apostles. How great is the goodness of God! The borders of grace are enlarged to the Gentiles, and not hid under the skirts of the Jews. He that was so long the God of the Jews, is now also manifest to be the God of the Gentiles; now he hath manifested himself a God of truth, mindful of his promise in blessing all nations in the Seed of Abraham; and that grace that sounded in the Gentiles' ears, hath bent many of their hearts to the obedience of Christ. REV. STEPHEN CHARNOCK.

Shiloh, *Author of Peace;* such is the Messiah, as described by all the prophets through the whole Old Testament: and so he is announced in the New Testament. By the prophets universally, the Messiah is depicted as the Sovereign, under whose sceptre the nations of the earth should be united. Jesus so describes himself.—*John* x. 16.

From this tribe, Judah, David sprang; and this family preserved the grand promise of the *everlasting kingdom*. From it was the great Author of peace to descend, who should unite the nations beneath his sway, and maintain upon earth a universal ever-during dominion. And so it came to pass. All the kings that reigned at Jerusalem, were of this tribe. Zerubbabel, who brought back the Israelites from the Babylonish captivity, was so likewise. And though, after a time, the supreme government came into

the hands of the Maccabees, who were of the tribe of Levi, yet the seat of government remained at Jerusalem, in the tribe of Judah. This state of things remained till the appearance of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ; the King of the true spiritual Israel. About six and thirty years after his death, was the dominion of the tribe of Judah *for ever* taken away, the sceptre broken, and Jerusalem destroyed. But, blessed be God, he has fulfilled his word which he had sworn to David. He hath said to Christ, the Son of David, " Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." By the power of his glorious gospel, Jesus Christ hath conquered the nations of the earth: he has established peace among them, and has united both Jews and Gentiles in one body, under himself the only Shepherd and Supreme Head. Already is his mighty empire extended to all the quarters of the earth. In every place hath he, by his religion, brought some of mankind to adore the true God. From the rising to the setting sun, prayer is made to the Eternal Father and his Son, by whom he made the world. The voices resound of countless thousands: Praise and honour, thanksgiving and glory, be to Him that is, and was, and is to come! Hallelujah. Praise Him, ye heavens! All ye nations of the earth, proclaim the glory of our God!

DR. SEILER.

" A sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh shall come; to him [shall be] the homage of the nations." — *Gen.* xlix. 10. This passage is not referred to in any part of the New Testament: but the general consent of both Jews and Christians, ancient and recent, has regarded it as a prediction of the Messiah. It coincides with the prominent character of the Messiah, in the descriptions of the Old Testament, that he would be the great Author of peace and happiness, in his capacity as a Sovereign Ruler. The application of this passage to the Messiah, rests upon the extreme difficulty, or rather impossibility, of assigning any event duly correspondent with the terms, except the cessation of a native government in Judæa on the deposition of Archelaus, and the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of Messiah's reign. Till the former of those events, the Jewish nation had their own royal family, were a recognized people, possessing a degree of independence, and were governed by their own laws. In the kingdom of Judah, the royalty was confined to that one tribe; while in the separated and rival kingdom of Israel, the kings were taken from any tribe.

The most usual explanation of this term, *Shiloh*, is the *Peaceful*, the *Pacificator*, or the *Giver of Peace;* thus corresponding to other well-known descriptions of the Messiah in the Old Testament. The appellation both suits the design of the passage, and the character of the Messiah, the most illustrious descendant of the tribe of Judah: he was to be the " Prince of peace, and to him should belong of *right* to have universal dominion." The gracious and munificent reign of the Messiah is, therefore, here affirmed, a spiritual sovereignty, dispensing spiritual blessings to the nations of the earth, and receiving their obedience and allegiance.

DR. J. P. SMITH.

Honour is here done to Christ by certain Greeks that inquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem, for that day was taken up in a public work, but a day or two after. These certain Greeks, some think, were *Jews of the dispersion*, some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called Greeks, Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called *Proselytes of the gate*, such as the Eunuch and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews, and therefore those among the Gentiles, who were piously inclined, joined with them in their solemn meetings as far as was allowed them. They were devout worshippers of the true God, even among them that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was in the latter ages of the Jewish church, that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple of Jerusalem; a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept of any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile, which was done by Eleazar the son of Ananias, the high-priest, Josephus saith, was one of those things that brought the Romans upon them. Though these Greeks, if uncircumcised, were not admitted to eat the passover, yet came to *worship at the feast.*

They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think they had acquaintance with him, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles: and then it teaches us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people, for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. Those who would see Jesus by faith now he is in heaven, must apply themselves to his ministers, whom he hath appointed for this purpose, to guide souls in their inquiries after him. Paul must see Ananias, and Cornelius must send for Peter. The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip, signified the *agency* of the Apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles.

Christ said to those two disciples, who spake a good word for those Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no,— *The hour is come when the Son of Man shall be glorified*, by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that he must be rejected of the Jews.

Observe the end designed by the *glorifying* of the Redeemer. And is it so? Do the Gentiles begin to inquire after me? Doth the morning star appear to them, and that blessed *day-spring*, which knows its place and time too, doth that begin to *take hold of the ends of the earth?* Then the hour is come for the *glorifying of the Son of Man.* This was no *surprise* to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. *Note*, the calling, the effectual calling of the Gentiles into the church of God, greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of Man. The multiplying of the redeemed was the magnifying of the Redeemer. There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of Man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph: *The hour is come!* REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

"By the name of Greeks all were called, who were neither Israelites nor proselytes, among whom there were not a few pious men, worshippers of the true God." — *Grotius.* The difficulty, which the apostles found about mentioning these "Greeks" to Jesus, as well as the subsequent discourse, strongly implies, that they were uncircumcised persons. It is supposed that they lived on the confines of Galilee, and thus got acquainted with Philip. They were favourable to the Jewish religion, and came to Jerusalem to worship; yet it is not said that they ate the Passover. They had heard of our Lord's miracles, were desirous of seeing him, and receiving his instructions, and they respectfully applied to Philip for that purpose. Probably, Jesus ordered them to be introduced to him.

Our Lord, on this occasion, declared openly, that the appointed time was at hand, when he should be advanced to his exalted throne, to be glorified as the Saviour and King of both Jews and Gentiles: yet this would not take place till he had laid down his life for them.

The near prospect which our Lord had of his most tremendous sufferings, excited on this occasion such a perturbation of mind, that he publicly declared that "his soul was troubled; and what should he say" in respect of the scene before him? "*Shall I say*, Father, save me from this hour?" Even his holy nature might have dictated this prayer; had he not known that he came into the world, and had continued so long upon earth, with a special purpose of passing through that season of darkness and anguish; without which all his former labours, obedience, sufferings, would be unavailing as to the grand object of his incarnation. He would, therefore, in perfect acquiescence, say, "Father, glorify thy name:" for he only desired to be supported through the dreadful scene, to the glory of the Divine justice, holiness, mercy, and truth, in the salvation of sinners. Upon this, the voice of the Father from heaven, which had attested him to be his Beloved Son, at his baptism, and when he was transfigured, proclaimed, that he "had both glorified his name, and would glorify it." The life, miracles, and doctrine of our Lord had manifested the glory of God; and his death, resurrection, and exaltation would still more extensively and illustriously display it. Those who heard this voice less distinctly, or the Greeks who did not understand the words spoken, said that "it thundered," as probably it was attended by thunder: others, who understood what was spoken, supposed that an angel addressed him: but none of them seem to have understood, that the Father thus attested his complacency in him and in his whole work. He therefore assured them, that this voice did not come for his sake, as he had been always satisfied of his Father's love; but for their benefit, that they might believe in him as the Son of God. REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

Who can wonder at the desire these Greeks expressed to see so celebrated a person as Jesus was! We hope there was something more than mere curiosity in it, and that at length they saw him with believing eyes, and, according to his prediction, glorified him by a cordial acceptance of his gospel. His disciples, we see, were ready to introduce them: and

surely every faithful minister of Christ will undertake the task with pleasure, when he sees souls awakened by Divine grace, and inquiring after Jesus with affectionate concern.

How admirable is the love and steadfastness of our Redeemer, who procured so great a happiness for us at so dear an expense! and even when his innocent soul was troubled in the view of his sufferings, instead of declining them, met them with joy! How should it animate us to renew that general comprehensive petition, than which none can be more suitable to us with regard to all the Divine dispensations: *Father, glorify thine own name!* Glorify thyself, O Lord! and to that great end dispose of us as thou pleasest; for we should abhor ourselves if we had any interest separate from thine! DR. DODDRIDGE.

These Greeks having applied to Philip, he, together with Andrew, whom he consulted on the occasion, informed Jesus of their wishes. They were immediately conducted into his presence, and the Saviour addressed them, with great solemnity, to the following effect:—

"The Son of Man, whom you now behold in circumstances of meanness, is about to enter on a state of the highest exaltation. But be not staggered, while you observe that my glory is preceded by extreme sufferings: for these are necessary to accomplish the object which I have in view, the salvation of precious souls. As the wheat springs up from the grain, which at first seems to perish in the earth, and which, except it putrefy, will produce no increase; so a numerous company shall be redeemed to God in consequence of my death, and not one of the human race can be saved without it. He also that professes an attachment to my cause, must be willing to make the most painful sacrifices. A solicitous regard to your temporal interests will endanger your eternal welfare; but while you can cheerfully give up life itself for my sake, you adopt the most effectual method to secure your own happiness for ever. If, therefore, you would acknowledge me as your Lord and Master, you must be obedient to my command, and follow, without hesitation, wherever I shall lead, even to the severest calamities; and then you shall be with me, to behold my glory, and sit down with me in my kingdom. My Father himself will declare his approbation of your conduct, and confer distinguished honour upon you."

Our Lord having adverted to his approaching sufferings, was deeply affected with the prospect; and, as if the terrors of death had fallen upon him, he cried, "Now is my soul troubled." He seemed, for a moment, confounded in the view, and ready to petition that he might be rescued from the cross. But whatever the weakness of human nature might suggest, he resolved not to shrink from that which was the grand object of his incarnation; and therefore he prayed only, "Father, glorify thy name." Immediately a voice from heaven declared that the Divine glory had already been secured, and would yet be more signally displayed by his ministry. While the astonished multitude wondered at the sound, many of them not hearing the words distinctly, Jesus remarked, that this

testimony was given not for his sake, as he could want no further assurances of his Father's love, but for the confirmation of their faith.

REV. THOMAS ROBINSON.

God is always equally glorious in himself: so he was before the foundations of the world were laid: before ever there were any creatures to celebrate his praise. But there is another glory of God, and that is his *declarative glory;* which is nothing else but that visible splendour and lustre that reflects from his essential glory, upon the notice and admiration of his creatures. God is, therefore, glorified by his creatures declaring and setting forth the infinite excellencies that are in his essence. We cannot set any new gems in his diadem, which did not shine there before; but when we observe and admire those several corruscations of his attributes which appear in those various methods that God takes to manifest them; then we are said to glorify God.

Christ prays, therefore (*John* xii. 28), "Father, glorify thy name;" that is, make thine essential glory, the glory and brightness of thine attributes, conspicuous to the world: to which request there was an answer returned from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again:" that is, as I suppose the words may well be interpreted, I have already glorified my *mercy*, which is my name, in thy *incarnation* and *mission*, and I will also glorify my *justice* in thy *passion* and *crucifixion:* by the one declaring how gracious I am in providing a Saviour for the ruined world; by the other how just and holy I am in exacting a full and complete satisfaction for the sins and transgressions of the world.

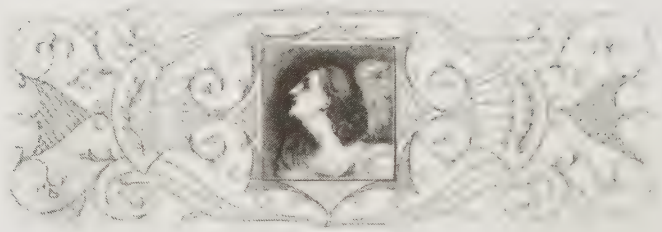
God's clearest manifestation of his glory was made in Christ, "who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."—*Heb.* i. 3. In him heaven was brought down to earth, the infinite comprehended, the invisible made conspicuous, and all the miracles both of grace and glory reconciled to our very senses. In him all the attributes of the Divine nature are so interwoven with the infirmities of the human, that, if I may so speak, God in him studied to exhibit to us a person like ourselves, to give us some advantage for our apprehensions to conceive of his infinite perfections. In him omnipotence became weak; eternity mortal, innocence itself guilty; God became man; the Creator, a creature; the Maker of all, his own workmanship; life itself in him underwent the sentence of death! And all these strange impossible truths, as for other ends, so for this, that we might have some clearer hints and discoveries of the infinite glories of God, which in their full brightness would only dazzle and confound us; and therefore the apostle calls him, "God manifested in the flesh."—1 *Tim.* iii. 16. Certainly God in flesh must needs be rather veiled and hidden than manifested: but although to himself he was obscured, yet to us he was manifested; because, if the glory of the Deity had not been thus clouded and allayed, it had not been manifested. Hence John, speaking of Christ in the mean estate of his humiliation, says of him, "We behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."—*John* i. 14. BISHOP HOPKINS.

"Father, glorify thy name." By the name of God is to be understood *himself* in all his attributes; his wisdom, truth, mercy, justice, holiness, &c. which were abundantly glorified by Christ's death and resurrection. Christ teaches here a lesson of submission to the Divine will. Do with me what thou wilt, so that glory may redound to thy name.

"Then came there a voice from heaven," &c. Calmet's note on this passage, taken from Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others, is as follows, in a literal translation:—"I have accomplished my eternal designs on thee, I have sent thee into the world to make an atonement for the sin of the world, and to satisfy my offended justice. I will finish my work. Thou shalt shed thy blood upon the cross. My glory is interested in the consummation of thy sacrifice. But in procuring my own glory, I shall procure thine. Thy life and thy death glorify me: I have glorified thee by the miracles which have accompanied thy mission; and I will continue to glorify thee at thy death, by unexampled prodigies, and thy resurrection shall be the completion of thy glory and of thy elevation."

Christ was glorified, 1. By the prodigies which happened at his *death*. 2. In his *resurrection*. 3. In his *ascension*, and sitting at the right hand of God. 4. In the *descent* of the *Holy Ghost* on the apostles. And 5. In the astonishing *success* with which the gospel was accompanied, and by which the kingdom of Christ had been established in the world.—2 *Cor.* ii. 14. "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." Probably meaning those *Greeks*, who had been brought to him by Philip and Andrew. The Jews had frequent opportunities of seeing his miracles, and of being convinced that he was the Messiah; but these Greeks, who were to be a first fruits of the *Gentiles*, had never any such opportunity. For their sakes, therefore, to confirm them in the faith, this miraculous voice appears to have come from heaven. DR. A. CLARKE.

God indeed is, ever was, and cannot but be Lord and King of the whole world: in this sense, therefore, we cannot pray for his kingdom as something future. But besides this natural kingdom of God, there is a moral and spiritual one, which he has given to men in the Scriptures. The gospel dispensation is "the kingdom of God," or "of heaven:" that dominion, which in Daniel it is foretold, "the God of heaven should set up, and which should never be destroyed." Our Saviour was then, after John the Baptist, only giving notice of its approach: the largest part of mankind hath not, so much as in profession, entered into this kingdom; but lies overwhelmed in Pagan idolatry, Jewish unbelief, or Mahometan delusion; and the largest part of Christians have corrupted the doctrines of Christ. Here then is great room and great need for praying, that the "Heathen may become the inheritance of Christ, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession:" when "the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." ARCHBISHOP SECKER.



THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope: for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.—*Psalm* xvi. 9, 10.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.—*Psalm* lxviii. 18.

And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.—*Matt.* xvii. 22, 23.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto

them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief-priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.—*Matt.* xxviii.

Jesus said, Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.—*Luke* xxiv. 49-53.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—*Acts* ii. 1-4.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Christ's crucifixion was public, at noon-day, before a great multitude. The Jews, who procured it, and the Romans, who executed it, would both take care that it was done effectually. Then, after this, we find him treated as dead, both by friends and enemies: Pilate, after a particular inquiry into that very matter, granted his body to be buried; one of his disciples embalming him with spices, another laying him in his own sepulchre; the Jews making no objection; but fully satisfied of his death, and only careful to guard against his resurrection. Notwithstanding, he was afterwards

really alive again, of which we have multiplicity of the strongest evidence. The sepulchre was newly hewn out of a rock, shut up with a very large stone rolled to the mouth of it, and guarded night and day by a band of soldiers, who were to watch till the time was over within which he had said he should rise: yet on that very day the sepulchre was found open, and the body was gone! Now by what means could this come to pass? To his disciples it could be of no possible use to carry on a deceit, by getting his corpse into their possession: for if they had succeeded so ill with their Master at their head, what could they expect by carrying on the same scheme after they had lost him, but to come to the same end?

Indeed, we find in fact, that far from being enterprising, they were so disheartened, even when he was first seized, that they all forsook him: and there was little likelihood that they should have more courage to attempt anything just after he was executed. Or if they had, what manner of chance was there, that when a band of *sixty* men, used to military discipline, were set to watch the grave, they should either find them all asleep at once, though it was death to be so, and not awake one of them; or be able to convey the body away from them, though they were awake? Evidently they must have failed, and probably have been seized in the attempt. Since then the body was not found, and could not by any human means, or indeed for any rational purpose, have been carried away, it must have been raised by the power of God, as it is related in the gospels.

Jesus, to give full and sensible demonstration of his resurrection, "showed himself alive to his disciples, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." — *Acts* i. 3. They could not have been mistaken: as they had almost despaired of his rising again, they were not willing to believe it on any other testimony than that of their own eyes and ears: Thomas even not without touching him, and putting his hands on the marks of his wounds: which the rest as well as he, when they were "terrified, and supposed they had seen a spirit," and not their Lord, were invited to do. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." — *Luke* xxiv. 37-39. *John* xx. 27.

This proof of our Saviour's resurrection is sufficient. He was in no way bound to appear to the rulers and the whole people of the Jews: nor does God, in any case, give men just such evidence as they please; but such as is enough for honest minds: and if others will not believe without more, they must take the consequence. Christ appeared to the *twelve* apostles often; to *five hundred* persons at once besides. If this number be thought too small, when was ever the tenth part of it required in any other matter? And if Christ was to appear to all the Jews, why not to all the Gentiles? This would have made strange confusion; and had the whole nation been convinced, their notions of the Messiah's temporal kingdom would probably have thrown them at the same time into a rebellion against the Romans; and then the gospel would have been thought a mere political artifice. Nay, had they continued quiet, and the Romans let them alone, even then we should have lost that evidence of the truth of our religion which arises

from the persecutions undergone by the first teachers of it: from the very advantageous circumstances, that the Jews, our adversaries, have been the keepers of those prophecies which prove Christ to be come; and also from their wonderful dispersion and preservation: besides the proof which will arise, in God's good time, from their conversion to Christianity.

Christ is justly said by the apostle to be "declared the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."—*Rom.* i. 4. But there are *two* things proved by it more particularly: *First*, that his sufferings are accepted by the Father as a full atonement for the sins of men: *Secondly*, from our Saviour's resurrection appears the certainty of our own. Since Christ is risen, our resurrection is possible; and since Christ hath promised, it is certain. "If then we believe that Jesus died, and rose again," we must believe too, as the apostle justly argues, that "them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and they, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—*Thess.* iv. 14. 16, 17. ARCHBISHOP SECKER.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was very God and very man. As man he suffered death for us: but as naturally God, he loosed the bands and pains of hell, destroyed the kingdom of death, rose from death to life, and so paid the ransom for our sins, and took away all the guiltiness of the same. And when our Saviour, Jesus Christ, had thus satisfied for our sin, and so overcome death and hell, then, like a valiant conqueror, he ascended into heaven, where God, his Father, received him with a most gracious triumph, and placed him on his right hand, and made him Lord over all creatures. And this is our most high and everlasting comfort, that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and we his servants: and although we die, yet he will raise us up again, because he hath overcome and conquered death. After that our Lord Jesus Christ, by his death, passion, and resurrection, had redeemed us, and obtained for us that our sins should be forgiven, and we be made the children of God; shortly after, in the feast of Pentecost, he sent down upon his apostles the Holy Ghost, in the likeness of fiery tongues: the which Holy Ghost gave them wisdom, skill, courage, and constancy, to teach boldly this holy gospel of Christ. ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

The disbelief of the apostles is the means of furnishing us with a full and satisfactory demonstration of the resurrection of our Lord. Throughout the Divine dispensations, every doctrine and every important truth is gradually revealed; and here we have a conspicuous instance of this progressive system. An angel first declares the glorious event. The empty sepulchre confirms the women's report. Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene showed that he was alive; that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that it was at least the spirit of Christ; that to the eleven showed the reality of his body; and the conviction given to Thomas proved it the

selfsame body that had been crucified. Incredulity itself is satisfied; and the convinced apostle exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"

COMPREHENSIVE BIBLE.

Messiah finished all that was appointed for him on earth, as the second Adam; he ascended on high, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Surrounded as we are with unnumbered difficulties, we plead against every accusation and threatening, that our Head is in heaven: we have an Advocate with the Father, a High Priest upon the throne, who, because he ever liveth to make intercession, is able to save to the uttermost. This is all our plea, nor do we desire any other. His ascension on high is a sure pledge that his servants shall follow him.

Messiah has received *gifts for men, even* for the rebellious. To bestow gifts upon the miserable, is *bounty;* to bestow them upon rebels, is *grace.* The greatness of the gifts contrasted with the characters of those who receive them, displays the exceeding riches of the Redeemer's grace. He came to save, not the *unhappy* only, but the *ungodly.* He gives pardon, peace, and eternal life to his enemies, wooed and besought by the consideration of the mercies of God, and conquered by invincible grace, through the dying agonies of the Mediator, whose grand gift, the Holy Spirit, renews their souls: then the rebels relent and sue for mercy; then they obtain faith, repentance, remission, a full and free salvation, and all the gifts which Messiah has received for them.

Messiah's ultimate design in favour of rebellious men, the great final cause of his mediation, and particularly of his bestowing on them the gift of the Holy Spirit, is, *that the Lord God may dwell among them.* Thus the heart, anointed with the holy unction (*John* ii. 20), becomes a consecrated temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" — 2 *Cor.* vi. 19. Again, he speaks of Christ dwelling in the heart: "Christ in you the hope of glory." — *Eph.* iii. 17; *Col.* i. 27. And in another place, "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them," agreeably to his promise by the prophets.

Messiah dwells likewise among his people in their collective capacity. His whole church, comprising all the members of his mystical body, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, forms a building fitly framed together, a palace, a holy temple!" for the Lord, the great King.

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

"Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." — *Eph.* ii. 18. Jesus, our Lord, having reconciled us to God by the cross, may I practically know what it is to have access unto him through Christ by the Spirit. I desire to know the great and glorious doctrine of the Trinity, not as a matter of theory or belief merely, but as a thing of experience and daily practice. Deliver me from a proud and presumptuous spirit, that would cavil at thy truth: deliver me from a too curious and prying spirit, that would attempt to comprehend that which it has not

pleased thee fully to reveal. Give me grace, in all simplicity of heart, to receive what thou hast declared, and feeling my own ignorance and nothingness, to adore thee in thy incomprehensible Majesty and unsearchable glory.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, I come to thee as one that spared not thy beloved Son for us; and, I beseech thee, receive, provide for, and bless me.

Blessed Redeemer, thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, my Mediator and my Advocate: my hope is in thy merits and thy intercession.

Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who showest the Saviour to sinners, I look to thee to teach and guide, to purify, strengthen, and console me. Amen.

REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

Our Saviour, having repeatedly conversed with his apostles after his resurrection, and afforded them many infallible proofs of its reality, led them from Jerusalem to Bethany, and was raised up to heaven in their sight; there to continue till he shall descend at the last day to judge the quick and the dead. He was parted from his disciples while he was solemnly blessing them; and multitudes of angels attended him with shouts of praise.—*Psalm* lxviii. 17.—xlvii. 5, 6.

Christ's ascension was designed for him, 1. To fulfil the types and prophecies concerning it. 2. To "appear" as a Priest "in the presence of God for us." 3. To take upon him more openly the exercise of his kingly office. 4. To receive gifts for men, both ordinary and extraordinary.—*Psalm* lxviii. 18. 5. To open the way to heaven for his people.—*Heb.* x. 19, 20. 6. To assure the saints of their ascension to heaven after their resurrection from the dead.—*John* xiv. 1, 2. REV. RICHARD WATSON.

Christ's sitting down at God's right hand, notes the high content and satisfaction of God the Father in him and in his work. "The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand:" the words are brought in as the words of the Father, welcoming Christ to heaven; and, as it were, congratulating the happy accomplishment of his most difficult work. He delighted greatly to behold him here in his work on earth, and by a voice from the excellent glory he told him so, when he spake from heaven to him, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—2 *Pet.* i. 17. And himself tells us, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life," &c.—*John* x. 17; for it was a work that the heart of God had been set upon from eternity; he took infinite delight in it.

Oh! here is the mystery, that flesh and blood should ever be advanced to the highest throne of Majesty, and being there installed in that glory, we may now direct our worship to him as God-man. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And the Father will accept of no honour divided from his honour. Therefore it is added, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."—*John* v. 22, 23. Hence the apostles, in the salutations of their epistles, beg for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus

Christ; and in their valedictions they desire the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the churches. REV. JOHN FLAVEL.

"Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them." — *Psalm* lxviii. 18. When the ark had ascended Mount Sion, and was deposited in the place assigned for it, the singers are supposed, by Dr. Chandler, to have proceeded with this part of the Psalm, in which they celebrate the ascension of their God and King, by the symbol of his presence, to the heights of Sion, after having subdued their enemies, and enriched his people with the spoil of the vanquished, and the gifts of the tributary nations; of which much was probably employed in the service of the tabernacle, and afterwards in building the temple, first designed by David, "that the LORD God might dwell," and have a fixed permanent habitation among his people. But the whole transaction, like many others of old, being a figurative one, the apostle (*Eph.* iv. 8) has applied the words before us to our blessed Saviour, (the true ARK, on which the GLORY rested,) who personally ascended up to the highest heavens, "led captivity captive," by triumphing over his conquered enemies, and having received gifts from his heavenly Father as the fruits of his victory, gave them unto men, as was most conducive to the establishment of his church, "that the Lord God might dwell among them.—Thou hast ascended on high;" thou, O Christ, who didst descend from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens to the lower parts of the earth, art again ascended from the lower parts of the earth to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens: "thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also;" and being thus ascended into thy glory, thou hast received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, with all his gifts and graces, to bestow upon the sons of men, even upon such as heretofore have not only broken thy laws, but appeared in arms against thee; yet of such as these, converted by the power of thy gospel, wilt thou form and establish a church; "that the LORD God may dwell among them;" that so, of thy faithful people, gathered from all parts of the world, may be built up a living temple, "a habitation of God through the Spirit." BP. HORNE.

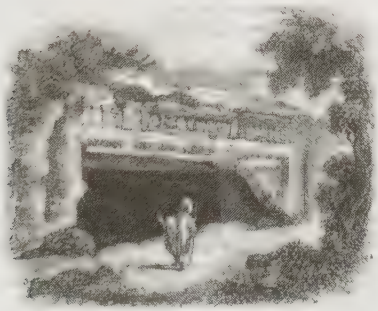
Jews, and Gentiles of various nations, were struck with one general surprise, when they found fishermen, and persons of no learning, declare in every tongue the wonderful works of God and his grace. And while they were busy in their inquiries into the cause of this great event, "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice," as their speaker, and beginning with the prophecy of Joel, concerning the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, preaches to them the life, and death, and resurrection of Christ. "We are witnesses," says he, "that God has raised him from the dead; and being exalted by the right hand of God, he has shed forth these wondrous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which the Father had promised him, and of which your own eyes and ears are present witnesses." —*Acts* i. 14. 33.

Since the gifts of the Spirit are shed forth in a way of promise and prediction, they more plainly appear to be Divine. It is the promised Spirit which our Saviour gave to men. It can never be said they were casual events, or they happened by chance; they were foretold by the ancient prophets, by John the Baptist, and by our blessed Saviour. They were promised to Christ Jesus by his Father, and he promised them to his own disciples, and bid them wait till they received them at Jerusalem. —*Luke* xxiv. 49.

Is the Spirit sent down to men in this wondrous manner? Then God has not failed of his promises to the Jews and Gentiles made by his ancient prophets; then the Father hath not failed of his promise to his Son Jesus, nor has the Son of God failed of his promise to his disciples and followers. Are these wondrous gifts of the Spirit sent down to publish and confirm the blessed gospel? Then surely it demands our firmest faith, since it was propagated at first by such Divine miracles, and has been established by such surprising and glorious gifts. How wisely, therefore, has God ordained these visible and sensible wonders, to prove the exaltation of his Son Jesus! And though the founder of Christianity submitted to death, yet the Christian church was never designed to die, because Jesus lives again in an exalted state, and hath all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit in his hand, which have been the life and soul of the church.

Thus all-glorious and divine is our salvation, from the original love, power, and promise of God the Father, through the sufferings, the death, and exaltation of Jesus Christ his Son, and by the gifts and graces of the blessed Spirit. Hence arise the talents and furniture of ministers, and hence the faith and hope, the life and holiness, the joy and comfort of Christians!

DR. WATTS.



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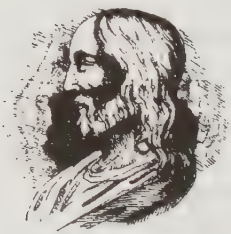

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LONDON:

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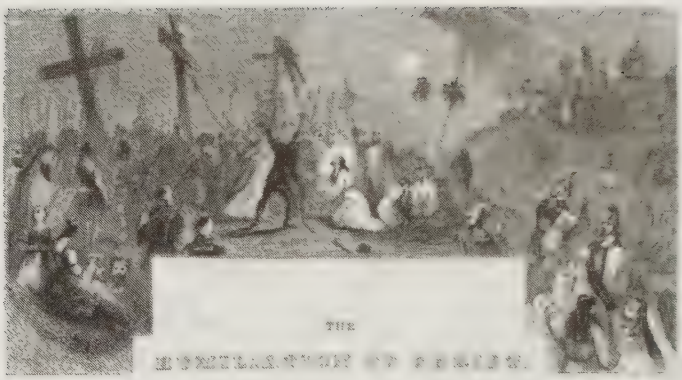

CHRIST AN EXILE IN EGYPT.

And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead, which sought thy life.—And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me.—*Exod.* iv. 19-23.

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.—*Hos.* xi. i.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream; saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which

he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.—*Matt.* ii. 13-23.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Christ's flight into Egypt, to avoid the cruelty of Herod, was the effect of the wise men's inquiry after him: for before that, the obscurity he lay in was his protection. It was but little respect, compared with what should have been, that was paid to Christ in his infancy; yet even that, instead of honouring him among his people, did but expose him to danger.

Joseph knew neither the danger the child was in, nor how to escape it; but God, by *an angel* tells him both *in a dream;* as before he directed him in like manner what to do.—*Matt.* i. 20. Joseph, before his alliance to Christ, had not been wont to converse with angels as now: so, those that are spiritually related to Christ by faith, have that communion and correspondence with heaven, to which before they were strangers.

Joseph is here told what their danger was, "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." God is acquainted with all the cruel projects and purposes of the enemies of his church. "I know thy rage against me," saith God to Sennacherib.—*Isai.* xxxviii. 28. How early was the blessed Jesus involved in trouble! Usually, even those whose riper years are attended with toils and perils, yet have a peaceable and quiet infancy; but it was not so with Jesus; his life and sufferings began together; he was born "a man striven with," as Jeremiah, (*Jer.* xv. 10,) who was "sanctified from the womb."—i. 5. Both Christ, the head, and the church, his body, agree in saying, "Many a time have they afflicted me, from my youth up." Pharaoh's cruelty fastens upon the Hebrews' children, and the great red dragon stands ready to "devour the man-child as soon as it should be born."—*Rev.* xii. 4.

Joseph is directed what to do to escape the danger. "Take the young child, and flee into Egypt." Thus early must Christ give an example to his own rule, (*Matt.* x. 23,) "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." He that came to die for us, when *his hour was not yet come*, fled for his own safety. Self-preservation being a branch of the law of nature, is eminently a part of the law of God. *Flee!* but why *into Egypt?* Egypt was infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and enmity to the people of God: it had been a house of bondage to Israel, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel: in Egypt, as much as in Ramah, *Rachel had been weeping for her children;* yet that is appointed to be a place of refuge to the holy child Jesus. God, when he pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes; for *the earth is the Lord's.* God, that made Moab a shelter to his outcasts, makes Egypt a refuge for his Son.

This exile may be regarded as a trial of the faith of Joseph and Mary: they might be tempted to think, if this child be the Son of God, as we are told he is, has he no other way to secure himself from man, that is a worm, than by such an inglorious retreat? Cannot he summon legions of angels to be his life-guard, or cherubims with flaming swords to keep this *tree of life?* Cannot he strike Herod dead, or wither the hand that is stretched out against him? But we find not that they made any such objections. God had provided for *the young child and his mother*, in appointing Joseph into relation to them; now the gold which the wise men brought would bear their charges. God foresees his people's distresses, and provides against them beforehand.

This may also be regarded as an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. As there was no room for him in the inn at Bethlehem, so there was no quiet room for him in the land of Judea. Thus was he banished from the earth by Canaan, that we, who for sin were banished from the heavenly Canaan, might not be for ever expelled. If we and our infants be at any time in straits, let us remember the straits of Christ in his infancy. REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

But whither then? Oh whither dost thou carry that blessed burthen, by which thyself and the world are upholden? To Egypt, the slaughter-house of God's people, the furnace of Israel's ancient affliction, the sink of the world. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son,* saith God. That thou calledst thy Son out of Egypt, O God, is no marvel: it is a marvel, that thou calledst him into Egypt; but that we know all earths are thine, and all places and men are like figures upon a table, such as thy disposition makes them.

What a change is here! Israel, the first-born of God, flies out of Egypt into the promised land of Judea; Christ, the first-born of all creatures, flies from Judea into Egypt. Egypt is become the sanctuary, Judea the inquisition house, of the Son of God. He that is everywhere the same, makes all places alike to his: he makes the fiery furnace a gallery of pleasure; the lion's den, a house of defence; the whale's belly, a lodging chamber; Egypt, a harbour.

Good Joseph, having his charge in the night, stays not till the morning: no sooner had God said *Arise*, than he starts up and sets forward. It was not diffidence, but obedience, that did so hasten his departure. The charge was direct; the business, important. He dares not linger for the light, but breaks his rest for the journey; and taking 'vantage of the dark, departs towards Egypt. How knew he this occasion would abide any delay? We cannot be too speedy in the execution of God's commands; we may be too late.

Here was no treasure to hide, no hangings to take down, no lands to secure; the poor carpenter needs no more, but locks the doors and away. He goes lightly, that wants a load. If there be more pleasure in abundance, there is more security in a mean estate. The bustard or the ostrich, when he is pursued, can hardly get upon his wings; whereas, the lark mounts with ease. The rich hath not so much advantage of the poor in enjoying, as the poor hath of the rich in leaving.

Now is Joseph come down into Egypt. Egypt was beholden to the name; as that, whereto it did owe no less, than their universal preservation. Well might it repay this act of hospitality to that name and blood.

BISHOP HALL.

Many Jews had settled in Egypt; not only those who had fled thither in the time of Jeremiah, (see chap. xlviii,) but many others who had settled there also, on account of the temple which Onias had built at *Heliopolis*. Those who could speak the Greek tongue enjoyed many advantages in that country: besides, they had the Greek version of the Septuagint, which had been translated nearly three hundred years before this time. Egypt was now a Roman province, and the rage of Herod could not pursue the holy family to this place. DR. A. CLARKE.

Who can behold Herod under the agitation of such a barbarous rage, and not see the vanity even of royal dignity, when the man that sways the sceptre over others, *hath no rule over his own spirit?* Surely none of the innocent victims of Herod's wrath, felt so much from the sword of their barbarous murderers, as the guilty mind of the tyrant from its own unnatural transports. The agony of a few moments transmitted these oppressed innocents to peace and joy; while the impotent rage of Herod only heaped on his own head, guilt, infamy, and horror. *He conceived mischief, and he brought forth vanity*—*Job* xv. 35: and, while he studied to prevent the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, and *set himself with impious rage against the Lord, and against his Anointed, He that sitteth in the heavens did laugh*, yea, *the Lord had him in derision*—*Psalm* ii. 2, 4. That God, who discerns every secret purpose of his enemies, and foresees every intended assault, knows how, whenever he pleases, by a thought, by a dream to baffle it.

The preservation of the holy child Jesus in Egypt, may be considered as a figure of God's care over his Church in its greatest danger. God doth not often, as he easily could, strike their persecutors with immediate

destruction; but he provides a hiding-place for his people, and, by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves his chosen seed from being swept away, even when *the enemy comes in like a flood.*

Egypt, that was once the seat of persecution and oppression to the *Israel of God*, is now a refuge to *his Son:* and thus all places will be to us what Divine Providence will be pleased to make them. When, like Joseph and Mary, we are cut off from the worship of his temple, and perhaps removed to a strange land, he can be a *little sanctuary* to us, and give us, in his gracious presence, a rich equivalent for all that we have lost.

Jesus survived his persecutors, and returned into the land of Israel again; but such was his condescension, that he abode at Nazareth, which seems to have been allotted him as the most humble station. Let us never be unwilling to bear reproach for him, who from his infancy endured it for us; nor take offence at the meanness of his condition, whose removes were directed by angelic messengers, as immediate envoys to the God of heaven!

DR. DODDRIDGE.

Herod, misnamed the Great, had a numerous offspring by his different wives, though their number was reduced by his unnatural cruelty in putting many of them to death. He is characterized by Josephus as a person of singular courage and resolution, liberal, and even extravagant in his expenditure, magnificent in his buildings, especially in the temple of Jerusalem, and apparently disposed to promote the happiness of every one. But under this specious exterior he concealed the most consummate duplicity; studious only how to attain and secure his own dignity, he regarded no means, however unjustifiable, which might promote that object of his ambition; and, in order to supply his lavish expenditure, he imposed oppressive burdens on his subjects. Inexorably cruel, and a slave to the most furious passions, he imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife, his children, and the greater part of his family; such, indeed, was the restlessness and jealousy of his temper, that he spared neither his people, nor the richest and most powerful of his subjects, not even his very friends. It is not at all surprising that such a conduct should procure Herod the hatred of his subjects, especially of the Pharisees, who engaged in various plots against him: and so suspicious did these conspiracies render him, that he put the innocent to the torture, lest the guilty should escape. These circumstances sufficiently account for *Herod and all Jerusalem with him being troubled* at the arrival of the Magi, to inquire where the Messiah was born.—*Matt.* ii. 1-3. The Jews, who anxiously expected the Messiah, "the Deliverer," were moved with an anxiety made up of hopes and fears, of uncertainty and expectation, blended with a dread of the sanguinary consequences of new tumults; and Herod, who was a foreigner and usurper, was apprehensive lest he should lose his crown by the birth of a rightful heir. Hence we are furnished with a satisfactory solution of the motive that led him to command all the male children to be put to death, who were under two years of age, in Bethlehem and its vicinity.—*Matt.* ii. 16.

REV. T. H. HORNE.

When Herod had gained possession of Jerusalem by the assistance of the Romans, and his rival Antigonus was taken prisoner, and in the hands of the Roman general Sosius, and by him carried to Mark Antony, Herod, by a large sum of money, persuaded Antony to put him to death. Herod's great fear was, that Antigonus might sometime revive his pretensions, as being of the Asmonean family. Aristobulus, brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his direction at eighteen years of age, because the people at Jerusalem had shown some affection for his person. In the seventh year of his reign, from the death of Antigonus, he put to death Hyrcanus, the grandfather of Mariamne, then eighty years of age, and who had saved Herod's life when he was prosecuted by the Sanhedrim; a man, who in his youth, and in the vigour of his life, and in all the revolutions of his fortune, had shown a mild and peaceable disposition. His beloved wife, the beautiful and virtuous Mariamne, had a public execution, and her mother Alexandra followed soon after. Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, were strangled in a prison, by his order, upon groundless suspicions, as it seems, when they were at man's estate, were married, and had children. I say nothing of the death of his eldest son, Antipater. If Josephus's character of Herod be just, he was a miscreant, and deserved the worst death that could be inflicted; in his last sickness, a little before he died, he sent orders throughout Judæa, requiring the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho.

DR. LARDNER.

"When Herod was dead."—Herod had nine wives, and by them many children. Three of his sons he put to death. Antipater being returned from Rome into Judæa, was convicted of his treasonable designs for the poisoning of his father, had sentence of condemnation passed upon him; which being confirmed by Augustus, he was accordingly put to death upon it: and, *five days* after that execution, died Herod himself, in the *seventieth* year of his age, after he had reigned, from the time of his being declared king at Rome, *thirty-seven* years, and from the death of Antigonus *thirty-four*.

Knowing the hatred the Jews had for him, he concluded aright, that there would be no lamentation at his death, but rather gladness and rejoicing for it all the country over. To prevent this, he framed a project and resolution in his mind, which was one of the most horrid, and most wicked, perchance, that ever entered into the heart of man. For having issued out a summons to all the principal and most eminent Jews in his kingdom, commanding their appearance at Jericho, where he then lay, on pain of death, at a day appointed, on their arrival thither, he shut them all up in the circus, and then sending for Salome his sister, and Alexas her husband, commanded them that, as soon as he was dead, they should send in the soldiers upon them, and put them all to the sword; "for this," said he, "will provide mourning for my funeral all over the land, and make the Jews in every family thereof lament at my death;" and when he had adjured them thereto, some hours after he gave up the ghost, and died.

But Salome and Alexas not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, rather chose to break their obligation, and therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they opened the circus, and permitted all to return again every man to his own home. The history of this his most wicked design takes off all objection to the truth of his *murdering the innocents*.

DR. PRIDEAUX.

Herod's disease grew yet more and more bitterly violent; God exacting this vengeance upon him for the punishment of the many great enormities he had been guilty of. He had a slow fever, not showing itself so much to the outward touch and feeling, as more grievously burning him within. Moreover, he had a strong canine appetite for meat, which nothing could satisfy. His bowels were ulcerated, especially the colon gut, from whence he suffered grievous pains. His feet being swollen, from thence issued forth a phlegmatic and shining humour. Moreover, the disease had seized the lower part of his belly, and an ulcer broke out, breeding worms and lice; besides he had a shortness of breath, and that very stinking and unsavoury. He had also a troublesome flux of rheum with it, and an asthmatic difficulty of breathing. And the patient not having strength enough to bear all this, there followed a convulsion of all parts of his body.

JOSEPHUS, *the Jewish Historian.*

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son." Israel was a type of Christ, as being by God called his "Son," his "First-born," (*Exod.* iv. 22); and God bearing the relation of "a Father to Israel," (*Jer.* xxxi. 9): hence Israel is put for Christ, (*Isai.* xlix. 3,) in these words, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;" and what is in the *Hebrew*, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," (*Isai.* xlii. 1,) is in the *Chaldee*, "My servant the Messiah," and in the *Greek*, "Jacob my servant, and Israel mine elect." Now as a prophetical prediction is then fulfilled when what was foretold is come to pass; so a type is then fulfilled, when that is done in the anti-type which was done in the type.

St. Matthew cites only these words of Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," as words to be fulfilled in Christ, and not any more, making Israel a type of Christ only in this regard, that they were called out of Egypt, as he was to be so; so that it doth not hence follow that any other words in this prophecy are to be referred to Christ, and so, no argument taken from the following words, which do not belong to him, can be of any validity to prove that these do not, which here the Holy Ghost applieth to him. Nor is it any objection against what hath been said, that the *Jews* could not understand this intendment of these words, for they were not concerned to understand it till the completion of these words in Christ; and then, sure, they, who abounded with mystical interpretations of the law and the prophets, could not reasonably object against this application of these words to God's calling his own Son out of Egypt.

DR. WHITBY.

There is no legitimate application of an Old Testament passage, which does not rest upon a foundation of solid reason, though that may be sometimes far from obvious, and may exist under limitations. Perhaps there are no instances that may be regarded as more completely accommodations than *Matt.* ii. 15, 18, and *John* xix. 36. But when it is considered that "Israel, called out of Egypt," contained the promise, the covenant, and the ancestry of the Messiah, and that this measure in the providence of Heaven would not have taken place, but with a view to that future Messiah;—that the sorrows of the bereaved mothers of Ramah would never have been occasioned, had not the covenant of Israel been violated, and that the massacre of Bethlehem was a repetition of the same sorrows, and on the same description of persons;—and that the Paschal Lamb, whose bones were to be so solicitously preserved from being broken, was a designed emblem (according to the ancient practice of recording knowledge by symbolical actions) of "Christ our passover being sacrificed for us;"—it will appear that these applications were not arbitrary, not made because of a fortuitous coincidence, not a compliance with a vicious Jewish practice, but possessing a real and just connexion, formed by the comprehensiveness of the Divine plan, and the Providential disposal of events, in themselves very minute and apparently very inconsiderable. Yet I would not call these and similar instances, *prophecies* of the Messiah, but *pre-arranged allusions.* DR. J. P. SMITH.

He shall be called a Nazarene.—A threefold interpretation is given of these words. Some read the words, 1, *He shall be called a Nazarite.* The Nazarites were a religious and separate rank of persons among the Jews, who abstained from wine, and came not near the dead for fear of pollution. Christ was a holy person, but no Nazarite, in a strict sense; for he drank wine, and touched the dead. 2. Others read the words, *He shall be called a Netzer*, a Branch, in allusion to *Isai.* xi. 1. where he is called a *Branch of the root of Jesse.* Christ was the true branch of which the prophets had so often spoken. 3. Others will have the word Nazarene refer to the city of Nazareth, where Christ was conceived, and lived most of his time. *He shall be called a Nazarene*, because he dwelt at the city of Nazareth. Hence his disciples were called a sect of the Nazarenes; that is, the followers of him that dwelt at Nazareth: and Christ himself is pleased to own the title, (*Acts* xxii. 8,) *I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest!* Learn from hence, the great humility of mind that was found in our Saviour. He was born at Bethlehem, a little city; he lives at Nazareth, a poor, contemptible place: he aspires not after the grandeur of the world, but is meek and lowly in spirit. May the same humble mind be in us, which was *also in Christ Jesus!* REV. W. BURKITT.

CHRIST TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

And Elijah arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God.—1 *Kings* xix. 8.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.—*Job* ii. 6, 7.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot

against a stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.—*Luke* iv. 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Our Lord's temptation has been a subject of much discussion among learned men: but the whole history of our Saviour is wonderful and miraculous from beginning to end; and I cannot find in any part of this narrative of the temptation, the slightest or most distant intimation that it is nothing more than a vision.

There is an observation which has been made, and which has great weight in this question: — it is this;— all the prophets of the Old Testament, except Moses, saw visions, and dreamed dreams: and the prophets of the New did the same. St. Peter had a vision; St. John saw visions; St. Paul had visions and dreams: but Christ himself neither saw visions nor dreamed dreams. He had an intimate and immediate communication with the Father; and he, and no one else in his days, had *seen* the Father. The case was the same with Moses; he saw God face to face. "If there be a prophet among you," says God to Aaron and Miriam, "I the LORD will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is *not* so, who is faithful in all my house: with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold." — *Num.* xii. 6-8. Now Moses, we all know, was a type of Christ; and the resemblance holds between them in this instance, as well as in many others. They neither of them had visions or dreams, but had both an immediate communication with God. They both saw God "face to face."—*Exod.* xxxiii. 11. This was a distinction and a mark of dignity peculiar to those two only,— to the great legislator of the Jews, and the great legislator of the Christians. It is therefore inconsistent with this high privilege, this mark of superior eminence, to suppose that our Lord was tempted in a vision, when we see no other instance of a vision in the whole course of his ministry.

It is an ingenious observation of a learned friend of mine, that the temptation of Christ in the wilderness bears an analogy to the trial of Adam in Paradise, and elucidates the nature of that trial in which the tempter prevailed and man fell. The *second* Adam, who undertook the cause of fallen men, — was subjected to temptation by the same apostate spirit. Herein the tempter failed, and the second Adam, in consequence, became the Restorer of the fallen race of the first. St. Paul, in more places than one, points out the resemblance between the first Adam and the second; and the temptation in the wilderness exhibits a most interesting transaction, where the second Adam was actually placed in a situation very similar to that of the first. The secrets of the Most High are unfathomable to

shortsighted mortals; but it would appear, from what may be humbly learnt and inferred from this transaction, that our blessed Lord's temptation by Satan was a necessary part in the Divine economy towards accomplishing the redemption of mankind. BISHOP PORTEUS.

Scripture instructs us that the devil is an evil spirit; the great enemy of mankind, who is permitted to try their hearts by tempting them to disobey God, and "seek the pleasures of sin for a season." At the beginning, he succeeded in beguiling Eve through his "subtlety," and so brought the world under condemnation. He still endeavours to keep every individual in thraldom: to prevent their recovery to God, or to pervert them from the stedfastness of their obedience.

It formed a part of that mysterious plan of mercy now devised for the restoration of the world, that the Redeemer should be tried by the enmity of that evil spirit, whose works he came to destroy: therefore he *was led by the Spirit into the wilderness*. It formed a necessary part of the scheme of man's redemption. It was foreseen: it was appointed. "Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit* into the wilderness." That Spirit which attended him always, now prompted him to retire from the company and the abodes of man, and to devote himself to prayer and fasting. And the purpose of this preparation was equally decreed. He "was led up into the wilderness *to be tempted of the devil*."

The mode of temptation employed here is not unlike that used towards Eve—(*Gen.* iii. 1.)—"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." *If thou be the Son of God, his beloved Son*, let a proof be seen of his favour. To shake our faith in God is the first object of the spiritual enemy. How beautiful is the reply! *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* There is something more needful to man than the supply of his temporal wants. The worst famine is "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."—*Amos* viii. 11.

We naturally ask, what made this trial necessary. Our Lord was now entering upon his ministry, which should fulfil the original prophecy, and "bruise the serpent's head." The dominion of Satan had too long prevailed; he had earned the title of "god of this world," "prince of this world;" men were led captive by him at his will. "The Son of God was manifested," that he might break this way; "might destroy the works of the devil." But Satan, we must believe, was aware of this great purpose. Without doubt he would endeavour to counteract it. He knew that the "Word was made flesh, and was dwelling among" men, "in form and fashion as a man." And as he had heretofore prevailed over flesh and blood, even though made "in the likeness of God," after his image; so he might hope to prevail again, and retain the world in his own power. Blessed be God, greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world! Jesus showed himself incapable of sin,—invincible by Satan: and so began his ministry as the Saviour of mankind, by proving his superiority over the destroyer of mankind.

Another reason made this temptation necessary. Jesus had taken our nature upon him, not only that he might be able in that nature to offer a satisfaction for our sins, but that, having belonged to our nature, and been subject to our trials, he might become a fit and proper example to his followers of complete and victorious virtue. We contend not, in our exertion for heaven, "against flesh and blood alone, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—*Eph.* vi. 12. Temptation "is common to man:" therefore was the "Captain of our salvation made perfect," not without temptation. And having been so tried, and having proved victorious in the conflict, he has left us an example that we "resist the devil, and he will flee from us:" though still an enemy, he is a conquered enemy: Christ has defeated and disarmed him; and now encourages us with the comfortable reflection, that "we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are;" so that inasmuch as he "himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—*Heb.* vi. 15; ii. 18.

Blessed Lord! enable us to go forth against the enemy of our souls, encouraged by thy example, and strengthened by thy power!

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

When he had fasted forty days. It is remarkable that *Moses*, the great lawgiver of the Jews, previously to his receiving the Law from God, fasted forty days in the mount; that *Elijah*, the chief of the prophets, fasted also forty days; and that *Christ*, the giver of the New Covenant, should act in the same way. Was not all this intended to show, that God's kingdom on earth was to be *spiritual* and *divine*? — that it should not consist in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost? —*Rom.* xiv. 17. Relative to the forty days' fast of Moses, there is a beautiful saying in the Talmudists. "Is it possible that any man can fast forty days and forty nights? To which Rabbi Meir answered, When thou takest up thy abode in any particular city, thou must live according to its customs. Moses ascended to heaven, where they neither eat nor drink, therefore he became assimilated to them. We are accustomed to eat and drink; and when angels descend to us, they eat and drink also." Moses, Elijah, and our blessed Lord, could fast forty days and forty nights, because they were in communion with God, and living a heavenly life.

The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world. Abbé *Mariti*, speaking of this mountain, says, "Here we enjoy the most beautiful prospect imaginable. This part of the mountain overlooks the *mountains of Arabia, the country of Gilead, the country of the Amorites, the plains of Moab, the plains of Jericho, the river Jordan, and the whole extent of the Dead Sea.* It was here that the devil said to the Son of God, *All these kingdoms will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" What renders this probable is, that at this time Judea was divided into several kingdoms, or governments, under the *three* sons of Herod the Great, viz. Archelaus, Antipas,

and Philip; which are not only called Ethnarchs and Tetrarchs in the Gospels, but also *Kings* and are said to *reign*. DR. A. CLARKE.

We went out [of Jerusalem] at St. Stephen's gate, being in all, of every nation and sex, about *two thousand* pilgrims. Having crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat, and part of Mount Olivet, we came in half an hour to Bethany, at present only a small village. At the first entrance into it is an old ruin, which they call Lazarus's castle, supposed to have been the mansion-house of that favourite of our Lord. About a bow-shot from hence you pass by the place which, they say, was Mary Magdalene's habitation; and then descending a steep hill, you come to the Fountain of the Apostles; so called, because, as tradition goes, those holy persons were wont to refresh themselves here, in their frequent travels between Jerusalem and Jericho.

From this place you proceed in an intricate way amongst hills and valleys interchangeably; all of a very barren aspect at present, but discovering evident signs of the labour of the husbandman in ancient times. After some hours' travel in this sort of road, you arrive at the mountainous desert into which our blessed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil. A most miserable, dry, barren place it is, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward. On the left hand, looking down in a deep valley, as we passed along, we saw some ruins of small cells and cottages, which, they told us, were formerly the habitations of hermits retiring hither for penance and mortification: and, certainly, *there could not be found in the whole earth a more comfortless and abandoned place for that purpose*. From the top of these hills of desolation, we had, however, a delightful prospect of the mountains of Arabia, the Dead Sea, and the plain of Jericho, into which last place we descended after about five hours' march from Jerusalem. As soon as we entered the plain, we turned upon the left hand, and going about one hour that way, came to the foot of the Quarantania, which, they say, is the mountain into which the devil took our blessed Saviour when he tempted him with that visionary scene of all the kingdoms and glories of the world. It is, as St. Matthew styles it, *an exceeding high mountain*, and in its ascent not only difficult but dangerous. It has a small chapel at the top, and another about half-way up, founded upon a prominent part of the rock: near this latter are several caves and holes in the side of the mountain, made use of anciently by hermits, and by some at this day for places to keep their Lent in, in imitation of that of our blessed Saviour.

REV. HENRY MAUNDRELL.

How replete with instruction is this history! It affords a striking representation of the power, the malice, and the subtlety of our adversary, and the nature of the warfare to which we are called. You, who follow Christ, must "resist the devil, and he will flee from you," (*Jam.* iv. 7,) as he did from Jesus. For this purpose, besides the other parts of the Christian's armour, "take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—

Eph. vi. 17. Your Saviour has left you a noble example. Study how you may use this weapon to the best advantage; that, like him, you may be able to answer and repel every suggestion with, "It is written."

Here, also, are exhibited the grace and tenderness of our Redeemer. How astonishing the humiliation to which he submitted! Painful to himself, yet most salutary in its consequences to us! Now we are assured that "he is able to succour you who are tempted" (*Heb.* ii. 18); that he is "touched with the feeling of your infirmities," iv. 15; and that he "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." — 1 *Cor.* x. 13. Yes, in due time you shall triumph over all the malice of your enemies. The victory of Jesus was an earnest of victory to his people. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."—*Rom.* xvi. 20. Angels are anxiously observing your conduct. In the view of such witnesses, "stand fast in the faith, — quit you like men,—be strong," (1 *Cor.* xvi. 13,)—and soon they will congratulate you on having obtained a glorious and everlasting conquest.

If you make no resistance, but willingly comply with the solicitations of Satan, the prince of darkness holds his palace in your hearts; and while you allow him the possession, he will not disturb you. But you are no other than his vassals, "led captive by him at his will." We entreat you to arise, and assert your liberty: for to what tremendous consequences will a continuance in your present bondage lead! Cry to God that he would rescue you from it, "deliver you from the power of darkness, and translate you into the kingdom of his dear Son."—*Col.* i. 13.

Rev. Thomas Robinson.

Who can read this account without amazement, when he compares the insolence and malice of the *prince of darkness*, with the condescension and grace of the *Son of God?*

What was it that animated and emboldened Satan to undertake such a work? Was it the easy victory he had obtained over the first Adam in Paradise? — or was it that he arrogantly concluded, that no heart could stand against the temptations of pride and ambition? Could he, who afterwards proclaimed Christ to be *the Son of the Most High God*, and had perhaps but lately heard him owned as such by *a voice from heaven*, make any doubt of his Divinity? Could he expect to vanquish time? We may rather conclude that he did not expect it; but, mad with despair, he was determined to worry that *Lamb of God*, which he knew he could not devour; and to vex with his hellish suggestions that innocent and holy soul, which he knew he never could seduce. Wretched degeneracy! *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!* to be thus eagerly driving on thine own repulse and disgrace!

But, on the other hand, how highly are we obliged to our great Deliverer! Who can sufficiently adore thy condescension, O blessed Jesus! who wouldst permit thyself to be assaulted, and led from place to place by an infernal spirit, whom thou couldst in a moment have remanded back to hell, to be bound in *chains of darkness*, and overwhelmed with flaming ruin!

The apostle tells us why he permitted this: it was, that *having himself suffered, being tempted, he might*, by this experience he had of Satan's subtlety, and of the strength of his temptations, contract an additional tenderness, and be the more inclined, as well as better *able, to succour us when we are tempted.* — *Heb.* ii. 18. Let this embolden us to *come unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in every time of need.*—*Heb.* iv. 16.

Let us remember and imitate the conduct of the great *Captain of our salvation;* and, like him, let us learn *to resist Satan*, that he may *flee from us.* Like Christ, let us maintain such a dependence on the Divine blessing, as never to venture out of the way of it, be the necessity ever so urgent; nor let us ever expose ourselves to unnecessary danger in expectation of extraordinary deliverance. Like him, let us learn to *overcome the world*, and to despise all its pomps and vanities, when offered at the price of our innocence.

To furnish ourselves for such a combat, let us take the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Let us not only make ourselves familiarly acquainted with the words of Scripture, but let us study to enter into the true design and meaning of it; that so, if Satan should attempt to draw his artillery from thence, we may be able to guard against the most powerful stratagem, and to answer perverted passages of holy writ by others more justly applied.

Once more; when the suggestions of Satan grow most horrible, let us not conclude that we are utterly abandoned by God, because we are proved by such a trial, since Christ himself was even tempted to worship the infernal tyrant: but, in such cases, let us resolutely repel the solicitation, rather than parley with it, and say, in imitation of our Lord's example, and with dependence on his grace, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

DR. DODDRIDGE.

How often do the greatest temptations succeed the highest testimonies of God's love! As soon as our blessed Lord himself had been owned from heaven as the Son of God, and filled with his Spirit, he was tempted, like as we are, yet without sin, but came off with triumph, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. When Satan, taking the advantage of necessitous and dangerous circumstances, put him upon first distrusting, and then presuming upon, the promise of God; and when he grew so insolent as to offer him the possession and the government of the world, upon condition of his paying religious worship to him, as God's delegate, which is due to none but God himself, Christ defeated all his assaults by the sword of the Spirit, thereby setting us an example, and showing us the way to resist and overcome every temptation through him that loved us. O what dreadful work has sin made! It has turned once good and holy angels into malicious and unclean spirits; has perverted human nature, and subjected it to the devil's cruel tyranny. But what a gracious, suitable, and Almighty Saviour have we! He is the sovereign Lord of life and death, — of devils and men. How excellent is his doctrine! How gloriously did

he confirm it without the least suspicion of fraud! But, alas! how many there are that get no further than the devils themselves in their faith concerning him as the Son of God! DR. GUISE.

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—*Heb.* ii. 18. Temptation, trial, may be for a *good purpose*,—by subjecting one to any evils or dangers, as God tried Abraham (*Gen.* xxii. 1); or by placing him in circumstances either prosperous or adverse, that are of a peculiar nature, as God did Israel.—*Exod.* xvi. 4; *Judg.* ii. 22. Trial may be for an *evil purpose;* as the Pharisees tempted Jesus, by proposing to him ensnaring and subtle questions (*Matt.* xix. 3; xxii. 18. 35); or, by laying before any one inducements to sin, as Satan does before the minds of men.—1 *Cor.* vii. 5; 1 *Thess.* iii. 5. In *both* these senses Christ was tried. "It pleased the LORD to bruise him, and to put him to grief" (*Isai.* liii. 10); and "It became him, for whom and by whom are all things, to advance to glory our Prince and Saviour."—*Heb.* ii. 10. The same Saviour was solicited by Satan to sin.—*Matt.* iv. 1-3; *Mark* i. 13; *Luke* iv. 2. Understood in either way, then, the Saviour was tempted in like manner as we are (*Heb.* iv. 15), though without sin. That he did not yield to any excitement to sin was owing to the strength of his virtue and holiness, not to the weakness of the temptation in itself considered. Men tempt God; they tempt Christ; and so did Satan; but there never was any disposition in Christ to yield to it.

Christ then, *being proved*, both by sufferings and by solicitations to sin, is fitted in a peculiar manner to succour those who undergo either kind of trial. He is not only possessed of a merciful regard for them, but he has direct and immediate sympathy with them, the result of his own personal feeling and experience. Wonderful condescension of redeeming love! Here lies the great mystery of godliness, God made manifest in the flesh. And while Jesus sits on the throne of the universe, Lord over all, the Christian is reminded, that he does this in his nature as his *brother*.—*Heb.* ii. 11. In the person of Jesus, man is exalted above the angels; yea, he himself is to attain a rank superior to theirs; for while Jesus passed them by (ver. 16), he laid down his life for us, in order to exalt us above them. —1 *Cor.* vi. 3. Deeper and deeper still becomes the mystery. The debt of gratitude appears boundless when viewed in this light; the baseness of our ingratitude and disobedience is boundless too; and all that we can do is, to lie down in the dust, overwhelmed with a sense of them, exclaiming at the same time with the prophet, "Who is like unto thee? A God forgiving iniquity, and passing by the offences of thine heritage!"

PROFESSOR STUART.

CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.—*Isai.* liii. 4, 5.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.—*Matt.* xxvi. 36-44.

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthen-

ing him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus, to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?—*Luke* xxii. 42-48.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

What a preface do I find to my Saviour's passion! a *hymn*, and an *agony:* a cheerful hymn, and an agony no less sorrowful. A hymn begins, both to raise and testify the courageous resolutions of his sufferings; an agony follows, to show that he was truly sensible of those extremities, wherewith he was resolved to grapple. All the disciples bore their part in that hymn; it was fit that they should all see his comfortable and divine magnanimity, wherewith he entered into those sad lists: only three of them shall be allowed to be witnesses of his agony; only those three that had been witnesses of his glorious transfiguration.

Now, before their eyes, this sun begins to be overcast with clouds; *He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.* Many sad thoughts for mankind had he secretly hatched, and yet smothered in his breast; now, his grief is too great to keep in, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* O Saviour, what must thou needs feel, when thou saidst so? Feeble minds are apt to bemoan themselves upon light occasions: the grief must needs be violent, that causeth a strong heart to break forth into a passionate complaint.—Woe is me! what a word is this for the Son of God!

Old and holy Simeon could foresay to thy Blessed Mother, that *a sword should pierce through her soul;* but, alas! how many swords at once pierce thine! Every one of these words is both sharp and edged; *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* What human soul is capable of the conceit of the least of these sorrows that oppressed thine? It was not thy body that suffered now: thy pain of body is but as the body of pain; the anguish of the soul is as the soul of anguish. Thou didst not say, "My soul is troubled;" so it often was even to tears; but, *My soul is sorrowful;* as if it had been before assaulted, now possessed with grief. Nor yet this in any tolerable moderation: changes of passion are incident to every human soul; but *exceeding sorrowful.* Yet there are degrees in the very extremities of evils: those that are most vehement may yet be capable of a remedy, at least a relaxation: thine was past these hopes, *exceeding sorrowful unto death.*

What was it, what could it be, O Saviour, that lay thus heavy upon

thy Divine soul? Was it the fear of death? Was it the forefelt pain, shame, torment of thine ensuing crucifixion? O poor and base thoughts of the narrow hearts of cowardly and impotent mortality! How many thousands of thy blessed Martyrs have welcomed no less tortures, with smiles and gratulations; and have made a sport of those exquisite cruelties, which their very tyrants thought insufferable! Whence had they this strength but from thee? If their weakness were thus undaunted and prevalent, what was thy power? No, no! it was the sad weight of the sin of mankind; it was the heavy burden of thy Father's wrath for our sin, that thus pressed thy soul, and wrung from thee these bitter expressions. What can it avail thee, O Saviour, to tell thy grief to men? Who can ease thee, but he, of whom thou saidst, *My Father is greater than I!* Lo to him thou turnest; *O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!*

While thy mind was in this fearful agitation, it is no marvel, if thy feet were not fixed. Thy place is more changed than thy thoughts. One while, thou walkest to thy drowsy attendants, and stirrest up their needful vigilancy: then thou returnest to thy passionate devotions, thou fallest again upon thy face.

If thy body be humbled down to the earth, thy soul is yet lower: thy prayers are so much more vehement, as thy pangs are: *And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

O my Saviour, what pain, what fear, what strife, what horror was in thy sacred breast! How dost thou struggle under the weight of our sins, that thou thus sweatest, that thou thus bleedest! All was peace with thee: thou wert one with thy co-eternal and co-essential Father; all the angels worshipped thee; all the powers of heaven and earth awfully acknowledged thine infiniteness. It was our person that feoffed thee in this misery and torment: in that, thou sustainedst thy Father's wrath and our curse. If eternal death be insufferable, if every sin deserve eternal death, what, oh what was it for thy soul, in this short time of thy bitter passion, to answer those millions of eternal deaths, which all the sins of all mankind had deserved from the just hand of thy Godhead? I marvel not, if thou bleedest a sweat, if thou sweatest blood. O Saviour, so willing was that precious blood of thine to be let forth for us, that it was ready to anticipate thy persecutors; and issued forth in those pores, before thy wounds were opened by thy tormentors. Oh that my heart could bleed unto thee, with true inward compunction for those sins of mine, which are guilty of this thine agony; and have drawn blood of thee, both in the garden and on the cross. Woe is me! I had been in hell, if thou hadst not been in thine agony; I had scorched, if thou hadst not sweat. Oh let me abhor my own wickedness, and admire, and bless thy mercy.

But, O ye blessed spirits, which came to comfort my conflicted Saviour, how did ye look upon the Son of God, when ye saw him labouring for life under these violent temptations! With what astonishment did ye behold him bleeding, whom ye adored! In the wilderness, after his duel with Satan, ye came and ministered unto him; and now in the garden,

while he is in a harder combat, ye appear to strengthen him. O the wise and marvellous dispensation of the Almighty! Whom God will afflict, an angel shall relieve; the Son shall suffer, the servant shall comfort him; the God of angels droopeth, the angel of God strengthens him!

BISHOP HALL.

"Jesus having spoken these words, went forth with his disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden, in which he entered and his disciples. And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place."

A garden, probably belonging to one of his friends. He might retire to this private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, but also that the people might not be alarmed at his apprehension, nor attempt in the first sallies of their zeal, to rescue him in a tumultuous manner. *Kedron* was (as the name signifies,) a dark, shady valley, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives, through which a little brook ran, which took its name from it. It was this brook which David, a type of Christ, went over, with the people, weeping in his flight from Absalom.

He began to be sorrowful and in deep anguish. Probably from feeling the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in his soul, while God *laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Who can tell what painful and dreadful sensations were then impressed on him by the immediate hand of God? The former word in the original properly signifies, to be penetrated with the most exquisite sorrow: the latter, to be quite depressed, and almost overwhelmed with the load.

And being in an agony. Probably just now grappling with the powers of darkness; feeling the weight of the wrath of God, and at the same time surrounded with a mighty host of devils, who exercised all their force and malice to persecute and distract his wounded spirit.

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

Christ's speech should be weighed, "My soul is exceedingly troubled; and what should I say? Father, save me from this hour. But yet for this very cause am I come into this hour." His purpose herein was most effectually to propose to the view of the whole world two contrary objects, the like whereunto *in force and efficacy* were never presented in that manner to any, but only to the soul of Christ. There was presented before his eyes in that fearful hour, on the one side, God's heavy indignation and wrath towards mankind, as yet unappeased; death as yet in full strength; hell as yet never mastered by any that came within the confines and bounds thereof; somewhat also, peradventure, more than is possible or needful for the wit of man to find out; finally, himself flesh and blood, and left alone to enter into conflict with all these: on the other side, a world to be saved by one; a pacification of wrath, through the dignity of that sacrifice which should be offered; a conquest over death through the power of that Deity which would not suffer the tabernacle thereof to see corruption, and an utter disappointment of all the forces of infernal powers through

the purity of that soul, which they should have in their hands, and not be able to touch. Let no man marvel that, in this case, the soul of Christ was much "troubled." For what could such apprehensions breed, but (as their nature is,) inexplicable passions of mind, desires abhorring what they embrace, and embracing what they abhor? In which agony, *how should the tongue go about to express* what the soul endured?

But here to what purpose should words serve, when Nature hath more to declare than groans and strong cries, more than streams of bloody sweats, more than his doubled and tripled prayers can express, who thrice putting forth his hand to receive that cup, besides which there was no other cause of his coming into the world, he thrice pulleth it back again, and as often, even with tears of blood, craveth, "If it is possible, O Father! or if not, even what thine own good pleasure is;" for whose sake the passion, that hath in it a bitter and a bloody conflict, even with wrath, and death, and hell, is most welcome. Whereas, therefore, we find in God a will resolved that Christ shall suffer, and in the human will of Christ two actual desires, the one avoiding, and the other accepting death.

REV. RICHARD HOOKER.

That the conflict in Christ's soul, in the view of his last sufferings, was dreadful, beyond all expression or conception, will appear from the effect which it had on his body, in causing that bloody sweat that we read of in the text. In our translation it is said, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." The word rendered *great drops*, in the original, properly signifies lumps or clots; for we may suppose, that the blood was pressed out through the pores of his skin by the violence of that inward struggle and conflict that there was, when it came to be exposed to the cool air of the night, congealed and stiffened, as in the nature of blood, and so fell off from him not in drops, but in clots. If the sufferings of Christ had occasioned merely a violent sweat, it would have shown that he was in great agony; for it must be an extraordinary grief and exercise of mind that causes the body to be all of a sweat abroad in the open air, in a cold night as that was, as is evident from *John* xviii. 18, "And the servants and officers stood there, who made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." This was the same night in which Christ had his agony in the garden. But Christ's inward distress and grief was not merely such as caused him to be in a violent and universal sweat, but such as caused him to sweat blood. The distress and anguish of his mind was so unspeakably extreme as to force his blood through the pores of his skin, and that so plentifully as to fall in great clots or drops from his body to the ground.

Consider what may be supposed to be the special end of God's giving Christ beforehand these terrible views of his last sufferings: it was, that he might take the "cup" and drink it, as knowing what he did. Christ, as God, perfectly knew what these sufferings were; but it was more needful also that he should know as man: for he was to suffer as man, and the

act of Christ in taking that cup, was the act of Christ as God-man. From this scene in Gethsemane, we learn the unspeakable love of Christ to sinners, the glory of Christ's obedience, and the wonderfulness of Christ's submission to the will of God! PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

If you doubt whether Christ sustained the *wrath* of God, let us follow him to the garden of Gethsemane. A scene which I would always recollect when I walk along the flowery garden, or enjoy the delights of any rural retirement. He had no remorse to alarm his spotless conscience: yet fearfulness and trembling came upon him. It was night, cold night; and though our Divine *Master* lay prostrate upon the earth, amidst the fall of chilling dews, he *sweat*,—sweat *blood*,—sweat *great drops* of blood, *running down* in reeking streams to the ground. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; yet so insupportable was his affliction that he could not forbear crying out, "My soul is sorrowful,—exceeding sorrowful,—sorrowful even unto death!" What cause, what *adequate* cause, can be assigned for this amazing anguish? None but the wrath of his Almighty Father; who was now become an inexorable Judge; treated him no longer as the Son of his love, but as the surety for unnumbered of his guilty creatures! REV. J. HERVEY.

"And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." If this blessed minister of heaven did comfort him with words, we must suppose, he humbly besought him to look upon the glory set before him, and reflect on the vast good that would arrive to all mankind by his passion, and that he encouraged him to go on with the great work of redemption. O my soul! and hath not God sent an angel to thee, a minister of his word in thy afflictions, and encouraged thee by the hopes of eternal glory to bear up, and to be undaunted under all the waves and billows that went over thee! Nay, hath not thy God himself suggested to thy mind what benefit thy affliction would yield, what peaceable fruits of righteousness, what hatred of sin, what love to holiness, and what humility it would produce! And yet none of these have been able to keep thee from sinking! How sensual is thy mind! How earthly are thy affections! What polishing, what refining do they want yet! And yet if affliction, which is the furnace that must purify the gold, will not do it, what can be supposed to do it?

"And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly," &c. See, O my soul! how thy sin presses the Son of God! See how great the horror of it is, that it forced him into agonies, and these agonies vent themselves in a bloody sweat! He saw the wrath of God, that flaming sword which hung over thee, the revenging arm that God shook against thee! He saw the hell thou hadst deserved, the torments thou hadst merited, the agonies thou hadst involved thyself in! He saw thy sins in their full latitude and extent, what encroachments they had made on the Divine nature, what affronts they had offered to the great Majesty of heaven! Being very sensible of the infinite purity of God, he saw the dreadfulness, the monstrousness of thy transgressions, which had made war with that Divine

purity. He saw the fire and brimstone, the everlasting furnace, the burning lake that was designed to be thy recompense: he saw it and trembled: he saw it and staggered. He felt it, being infinitely compassionate, and feeling it, laboured to shake it off, and to get from under it; and as he struggles with the load, his sacred body breaks forth in a strange kind of sweat. Didst thou ever consider, O my soul, what thy sins did cost? Hadst thou considered it, how couldst thou have been so merry, so blithe, so jocular in the commission? Behold the agony of thy Saviour!

DR. HORNECK.

Observe what passed between Christ and his disciples at this time. He comes and *finds them asleep*. What had become of us if Christ had been now as sleepy as his disciples were? It is well for us that our salvation is in the hand of one who *neither slumbers nor sleeps*. Christ bespoke them to watch with him, as if he expected some succour from them, and yet they slept; surely it was the unkindest thing that could be. When David wept at this Mount of Olives, all his followers wept with him.—2 *Sam.* xv. 30. But when the Son of David was here in tears, his followers were asleep. Lord, what is man? what are the best of men when God leaves them to themselves?

Christ loves them notwithstanding. Persons in sorrow are too apt to be cross and peevish with those about them, and to take it very heinously if they but seem to neglect them; but Christ in his agony is as meek as ever, and carries it as patiently towards his followers as towards his Father!

When Christ's disciples put this slight upon him, *He came to them*, as if he expected to receive some comfort from them: more careful for them than they were for themselves, when he was most engaged, he came to look after them; for those that were given to him were upon his heart living and dying!

He gave them a gentle reproof; for as many as he loves he rebukes. Sometimes he *continued all night in prayer to God*, but then he did not expect his disciples should watch with him; only now when he had but one hour to spend in prayer!

He gave them good counsel: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." *He kindly excused them:* "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." In this he set us an example of that love which covers a multitude of sins!

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

On the most transient survey of this amazing story, we cannot but fall into deep admiration. What a sight is here! Let our souls turn aside to behold it with a becoming temper, and surely we must wonder how the disciples could sleep in the midst of a scene which might have almost awakened rocks and trees to compassion.

Behold the Prince of life, God's incarnate and only begotten Son, *drinking of the brook in the way*, (*Psalm* cx. 7,) and not only tasting, but drawing in full draughts of that bitter cup which his heavenly Father put in his hands on this awful occasion. Let us behold him kneeling, and even prostrate on the ground, and there pouring out his *strong cries and*

tears to him that was able to save him from death.—Heb. v. 7. Let us view him in this bloody agony, and say, *If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry.—Luke* xxiii. 31. If even Christ himself was so depressed with sorrow and amazement, and the distress and anguish he endured were such, that, in his agony, the sweat ran from him like great drops of blood, when *our iniquities were laid upon him*, and it *pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief*, (*Isai.* liii. 6, 10,) how must the sinner then be filled with horror, and with what dreadful agonies of anguish and despair will he be overwhelmed, when he shall bear the burden of his own iniquities, and God shall pour out all his wrath upon him? Behold how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!—Heb.* x. 31.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

Suffering, then, is the process, which God has appointed to operate perfection even in Christ; and O what rich and precious comfort is thus imparted to all those who suffer for righteousness sake, or according to the will of God.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer."—"It became God, and it behoved Christ." As to the sufferings themselves of Christ, however, we are left in comparative darkness. Our whole amount of knowledge is derived from a partial resemblance, from an imperfect analogy. We know by experience, somewhat concerning the depth of the sympathies of the human nature; but what shall unfold to us the extent of the capacities of the Divine? We may indeed attend the Divine Redeemer through His earthly pilgrimage: we may trace him in every stage as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: while His couch by night is—so to speak—watered with tears, and His path by day is tracked in blood. Nor is man his only, or even his deadliest or most formidable enemy. We may see Him led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Yea we may hear Him acknowledge for a season the permitted potency of the foe, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." As to outward and visible sufferings, indeed, many disciples may have been as their Master, many servants as their Lord. But what shall we say of the bitterness of His inward and unseen sufferings? It *did* occasionally find a force or vent: He *did* at times appear to be labouring with some indescribable, uncontrollable agony: He *did* at times give relief, or at least expression to the burden of His heart, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" This sad utterance was wrung forth, however, while the trial was yet in distant prospect: as it comes nearer and more near, His soul becomes exceeding sorrowful unto death; the sweat stands upon his brow as large drops of blood; and his whole frame is convulsed and shattered as He prays, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And when it is demanded, "Wherefore God thus ordained and thus disposed?" we can answer only, "Because it thus became God, and thus it behoved Christ."

REV. THOMAS DALE.

CHRIST REJECTED.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living.—*Isai.* liii. 3-8.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered, and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses?—behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered, and said, He is guilty of death.—*Matt.* xxvi. 59-66.

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of

the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.—*Luke* xxiii. 1-11.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. — *Matt.* xxvii. 3-5.

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? — Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?—for he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.—*Matt.* xxvii. 17-20.

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king,

speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him; crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar!—*John* xix. 12-15.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children!—*Matt.* xxvii. 24, 25.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Jesus being now in the possession of his enemies, they that had laid hold on him led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Their object was, to put Jesus to death; and for this purpose they sought out for false witnesses, to charge him with a *capital* crime. To condemn any one to death, their own law required two witnesses; and it was also necessary for them to produce evidence sufficient to induce the Roman governor to ratify their sentence, without which it was of no avail. There was no difficulty in finding out and suborning false witnesses, disposed to conform to their wishes; but for a long time none whose evidence could prove against Jesus a capital offence. But at length "came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Now to speak disrespectfully, or to prophesy against the temple, was considered by the Jews as *blasphemy*, and, of course, a capital offence. His answer to the Jews was not as the witnesses stated it, "I am able to destroy this temple;" but it was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."—*John* ii. 19.

The high priest, sensible perhaps that even this evidence would not completely answer his purpose, proceeds to interrogate our Saviour, hoping that he might be drawn by artful questions to condemn himself. He arose, therefore, and said unto Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these witness against thee?" Is it true, or is it false?—and what have you to say in your own defence? But Jesus held his peace. He disdained to make any answer to such unfounded and contemptible accusations. He saw that his judges were predetermined; that everything he could say would be of no avail; and that the only proper part for him to take was, to observe a dignified silence. The high priest, perceiving this, had recourse

to a measure which he knew must compel our Lord to speak: "I adjure thee," says he, "by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God." This calling upon a man to swear by the living God, was called the oath of adjuration, and was the Jewish mode of administering an oath either to a witness or a criminal; and, when so adjured, they were obliged to answer. Jesus now, therefore, conceived himself bound in conscience to break his silence, and said to the high priest, "Thou hast said;" that is, thou hast said what is true, — I *am* the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. But as our Lord's situation and appearance did but ill accord with a character of such high dignity, he proceeds to assure his judges that they should in due time have the fullest proof of it: for, says he, "hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Sitting at the right hand of power, means sitting at the right hand of God; and *coming in the clouds of heaven* was, with the Jews, a characteristic mark of the Messiah. "Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." Then did they spit in his face, and buffetted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee!"

BISHOP PORTEUS.

Judas, when he saw that he was condemned, repented, &c. There is much of the wisdom and goodness of God to be seen in this part of Judas's conduct. Had our Lord been condemned to death on the evidence of one of his own disciples, it would have furnished infidels with a strong argument against Christ and the Christian religion. But the traitor, being stung with remorse, came and acknowledged his crime, and solemnly declared the innocence of his master, threw back the money which *they* gave him to induce him to do this villanous act; and, to establish the evidence which he now gave against *them* and *himself*, in behalf of the *innocence* of Christ, hanged himself, or died through excessive grief and contrition. Thus the character of Christ was rescued from all reproach; infidelity deprived of the power to cry "Imposture!" and the Jewish rulers overwhelmed with eternal infamy. If it should ever be said, "One who knew him best delivered him up as an impostor," — to this it may be immediately answered, "The *same person*, struck with remorse, came and declared his own guilt and Christ's innocence; *accused* and *convicted* the Jewish rulers, in the *open* council, of having *hired* him to do this iniquitous action, threw them back the bribe they had given him, and then hanged himself through distress and despair, concluding his iniquity in this business was *too great* to be *forgiven*." Let him who chooses, after this plenary evidence of the innocence of Christ, continue the objection, and cry out *Imposture!* take heed that *he* go not and do LIKEWISE: Caiaphas, Pilate, and Judas, have done so already. God is a jealous God, and highly resents everything that is done and said against that eternal truth that came to man through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

DR. A. CLARKE.

What eyes can but run over, to see the Lord of life dragged through the streets to the house of Annas, thence to the house of Caiaphas, from him to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back again to Pilate, from Pilate to his Calvary; while the rabble run after him with shouts and scorns? The priests and scribes and elders are the first in this bloody scene: they have paid for this head, and now long to see what they shall have for their thirty silverlings. Two witnesses say, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it again in three days." Perjured wretches! he said, "Destroy ye:" ye say, "I am able to destroy." He said, "This temple" of his body: ye say, "The temple of God." He said, "I will make up this temple" of my body in three days: ye say, "I am able in three days to build this" material "temple of God."

Caiaphas was not more malicious than crafty: what an accusation could not effect, an adjuration shall; "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." He that hath charged us to confess him, cannot but confess himself: "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said." Caiaphas, thou shalt hear more than thou demandest: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Insolent high priest! that Son of Man whom thou seest, is the Son of God whom thou canst not see: that Son of Man, that Son of God, that God and Man whom thou now seest standing before thy consistorial seat, shalt thou see majestically sitting on the throne of heaven, attended with thousand thousands of angels! Go now, hypocrite, and rend thy garments, while thou art worthy to have thy soul rent for thy spiteful blasphemy against the Son of God! Thy pretence cannot but receive applause from thy compacted crew; "What need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? And they answered and said, He is guilty of death."

"And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ and King." O impudent suggestion! What marvel is it, O Saviour, if thine honest servants be loaded with slander? Go, ye shameless traducers, and swear that truth is guilty of all falsehood; and that the sun is the only cause of darkness! Now Pilate startles at the charge. The least whisper of a usurpation is entertained with a jealous care. "Art thou then the King of the Jews?" He felt his own freehold now touched: it was time for him to stir. Daniel's weeks were now famously known to be near expiring. Perhaps Pilate supposed some conspiracies on foot, and therefore asks curiously, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate shall know him such a King as all kings ought to acknowledge and adore: "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate's tongue says, "I find in him no fault at all:" the Jew's tongue in Pilate's mouth says, "Let him be crucified."

Conscience and justice being ready to sway Pilate's distracted heart to a just admission, I hear the Jews cry out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." There is the word that strikes it dead. In vain

shall we hope that a carnal heart shall prefer God to Cæsar. Pilate hastes into the judgment-hall: he sentences, — "Let him be crucified!" Yet how foul soever his soul shall be, his hands shall be clean; "He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." This is expiation enough! Protest thou art innocent, and thou canst not be guilty! Vain hypocrite! Is the guilt of the blood of the Son of God to be wiped off with such ease? What poor shifts do foolish sinners make to beguile themselves!

BISHOP HALL.

"Who shall declare his generation?" *His manner of life who would declare?* My learned friend, Dr. Kennicott, has communicated to me the following passages from the Mishna, and the Gemara of Babylon, as leading to a satisfactory explication of this difficult place. It is said in the former, that, before any one was punished for a capital crime, proclamation was made before the prisoner by the public crier in these words: "Whosoever knows anything concerning his innocence, let him come and declare it concerning him." On which passage the Gemara of Babylon adds, that, "before the death of Jesus, this proclamation was made for forty days; but no defence could be found." On which words Lardner observes, "It is truly surprising to see such falsities, contrary to well-known facts." The report is certainly false; but this false report is founded on the supposition that there was such a custom, and so far confirms the account above given from the Mishna. The Mishna was composed in the middle of the second century, according to Prideaux.

Now it is plain from the history of the four Evangelists, that in the trial and condemnation of Jesus no such rule was observed (though, according to the account of the Mishna, it must have been in practice at that time); no proclamation was made for any person to bear witness to the innocence and character of Jesus; nor did any one voluntarily step forth to give his attestation to it. And our Saviour seems to refer to such a custom, and to claim the benefit of it, by his answer to the high priest, when he asked him of his disciples, and of his doctrine: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? — ask them which heard me what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."—*John* xviii. 20, 21. This, therefore, was one remarkable instance of hardship and injustice, among others, predicted by the prophet, which our Saviour underwent in his trial and sufferings.

Paul likewise, in similar circumstances, standing before the judgment-seat of Festus, seems to complain of the same unjust treatment,—that no one was called, or would appear to vindicate his character. "My manner of life, from my youth, which was at the first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify; that after the straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."—*Acts* xxvi. 4, 5.

BISHOP LOWTH.

During these transactions, Pilate received a message from his wife, then with him at Jerusalem, and who had that morning been informed of something in a dream which gave her great uneasiness. Perhaps it presaged the vengeance of the Almighty pursuing her husband and family on account of the injustice he was going to commit. But, whatever the dream was, it had so great an effect on this Roman lady, that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting on the tribunal in the Pavement, and begged him to have no hand in the death of the righteous person who was then brought to his bar.

As the people had not yet determined whether they should have JESUS or Barabbas released to them, Pilate therefore, when he received the message from his wife, called the chief priests and rulers together, and, in the hearing of the multitude, made a speech to them, in which he gave them an account of the examination which JESUS had undergone both at his own and Herod's tribunal, declaring that in both courts it had turned out honourably to his character; for which reason he proposed to them that he should be the object of the people's favour and be acquitted. They cried out all at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." Finding it therefore in vain to struggle with their prejudices, Pilate called for water, and washed his hands before the multitude, crying out at the same time, that the prisoner had no fault, and that he himself was not accessary to his death: complying with the institutions of Moses, which orders, in case of an unknown murder, the elders of the nearest city to wash their hands publicly, and say, "*Our hands have not shed this blood.*" Pilate therefore made this most solemn and public declaration of the innocence of our dear Redeemer. But the Jews continued inflexible, and cried out with one voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Dreadful imprecation!

Pilate released unto them Barabbas: and the soldiers having scourged the blessed Jesus, carried him into the Pretorium, where they dressed him in a purple robe, in derision of his being the King of the Jews. Having dressed him, they put a reed in his hand instead of a sceptre, and a wreath of thorns they put on his head for a crown, so forcing it down that his face was besmeared with his most precious blood. To the Son of God, in this condition, the rude soldiers bowed the knee, giving him severe blows on the head, and then spit on him to express their highest contempt.

Jesus now appeared on the Pavement, with his hair, his face, his shoulders, all clotted with blood, and the purple robe bedaubed with spittle; and that the sight of Jesus in this distress might make the greater impression on the people, Pilate cried out, "Behold the man!" As if he had said, Will nothing make you relent? Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity and bowels of compassion for an innocent son of Abraham thus injured? The priests, whose malice had extinguished the sentiments of justice and feelings of piety, and also that love which countrymen bear to each other, no sooner saw Jesus than, fearing the fickle populace might relent, laying decency aside, they led the way to the multitude, crying out with all their might, "Crucify him! crucify him! Release not this man, but Barabbas!"

DR. WRIGHT.

Behold how all imaginable circumstances seem to conspire to increase the infamy thrown on that sacred head, which now most worthily wears a crown of eternal glory! "*Of a truth*, O Lord, *against thy holy child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles*, and the chief priests, *and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done.*"—*Acts* iv. 27, 28. The wisest person on earth was by Herod and his soldiers derided as a fool; the most deserving was condemned by the chief priests; and the most innocent was treated as a criminal by Pilate, and furiously demanded as a public victim by the Jews. All the proofs of his innocence are overborne by a loud and senseless cry; and those Hosannas with which the streets and temple were so lately echoing, are exchanged into "Crucify him! crucify him!" So uncertain is human applause, and so unrighteous may human judgments be!

Who can, without trembling, read that dreadful imprecation, "*May his blood be on us and on our children!*"—words which, even to this day, have their remarkable and terrible fulfilment in that curse which has pursued the Jews! Lord, may it at length be averted, and even turned into a blessing! May they *look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*, till all the obstinacy of their hearts be subdued!—till they bow down in glad submission to that King whom God has set on his holy hill, and thus are brought themselves to reign with him in everlasting honour and joy!

DR. DODDRIDGE.

How shocking is it to think that there should ever be such perverseness, obstinacy, and inhumanity in the heart of man, as were found among the high priests, populace, and soldiers, against so innocent, meek, and divine a person as our blessed Lord! The hideous nature of sin may be seen in the treachery of Judas, in the invidious, false accusation of the high priest and others, in the unrighteous judgment of Pilate against the convictions of his own conscience, in the vile abuses of the officers, soldiers, and mob, all combining against our blessed Saviour, and in the whole of the complicated sufferings he endured to "make reconciliation for iniquity." Oh! what is man! how fickle, wicked, and vain! — one day crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" — and a few days after, "Crucify him! crucify him! Release to us not this man, but Barabbas!" But whoever were the criminal instruments of cruelty, and whatsoever were the righteous terrors of God against him, the transgressions of his people were the procuring cause of all. Had it not been for their sins, he had never been falsely accused, reproached, insulted, crowned with thorns, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, and had never been filled with bitter anguish under his Father's desertions. But the prophecies of a suffering Saviour were then to be fulfilled in him; and God overruled and ordered all things, to accomplish the eternal counsels of his own will, for the redemption of the church, and, at the same time, to give an honourable testimony to Christ's personal innocence and excellence, and to his character as his Son, and the true Messiah!

DR. GUISE.

CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION.

They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.—*Zech.* xii. 10.

Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the Shepherd.—*Zech.* xiii. 7.

My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?—*Psal.* xxii. 1.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

PILATE saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief-priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross, went forth into a place called in the Hebrew Golgotha; where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. — *John* xix. 15-18. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.—*Luke* xxiii. 34.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief-priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. — *John* xix. 19. 22.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. — *Luke* xxiii. 39, 42, 43.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat,—woven without seam. They said, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. — *John* xix. 23, 24. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—*John* xix. 25-27.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.—*Matt.* xxvii. 46-49.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.—These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.—*John* xix. 30. 32, 33, 34. 36, 37.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

When the Redeemer was suspended in agony upon the cross, the assembled rabble had a full view of the innocent victim; and from the position of the muscles of the body, and the great consumption of flesh which had taken place, by reason of continual grief, they could easily number the protruding bones.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. It appears from the gospel history, that there were four soldiers more immediately concerned in the act of Christ's crucifixion.—*John* xix. 23, 24. Though it was customary to strip the victim naked before placing him upon the cross, yet it was not till after he had expired, that the executioners of the dreadful sentence were entitled to receive their wonted perquisite. When, therefore, Jesus was crucified, the soldiers parted equally amongst themselves his upper garments; and, because they perceived the superior value of his seamless robe, they determined to cast lots, in order to decide who should be its future possessor. In all this they were guided by the influence of their own feelings, and were altogether unconscious of any agency acting upon them, save the dictates of their own rational minds: but who does not perceive that they were chosen instruments of God for the fulfilment of Scripture; and, though they were ignorant of it, they were verifying that sure and unerring word of prophecy, the minutest parts of which shall in no way pass till all be fulfilled. DR. MORISON.

This probably was the first time that this thief had the knowledge of Christ. He improved his time at last, in that extraordinary manner, as perhaps no man ever did before, or will hereafter. He then believed Christ to be the Saviour of the world, when one of his disciples had betrayed, another had denied him, and all of them had forsaken him; to be the Son of God, the Lord of life, when he was hanging on the cross, suffering the pangs of death, and seemingly deserted by his Father: he proclaims him the Lord of Paradise, when all the Jews condemned him, and the Gentiles crucified him as an impostor and a malefactor. He feared God, acknowledged the justice of his punishment, and did with patience submit to it: he condemned himself, and justified the holy Jesus, declaring that "he had done nothing amiss." He was solicitous, not for the preservation of his body, but the salvation of his soul; not only for his own, but the salvation of his brother-thief, whom he so charitably reprehends, so earnestly requests not to proceed in his blasphemous language, so lovingly inviteth to the fear of God. So that the glory which he did to Christ, by his faith and piety on the cross, seems such as the whole series of a pious life in other men can hardly parallel. DR. WHITBY.

How great and glorious does the Lord Jesus Christ appear in the midst of all those dishonours which his enemies were now heaping upon him! While these rapacious soldiers were dividing the spoils, parting his raiment among them, and casting lots for his vesture, God was working in all, to crown him with a glory which none could take from him.

His enemies upbraided him as an abandoned miscreant, deserted both by God and man. But as soon as the penitent thief addressed him with that humble supplication, the language of repentance, faith, and hope, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," he immediately hears and answers him; and in how gracious and remarkable a phrase! "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!" What a triumph was here, not

only of mercy to the dying penitent, but of the strongest faith in God, that, when to an eye of sense he seemed to be the most deserted and forgotten by him, and was on every side beset with the scorn of them that were at ease, and with the contempt of the proud, he should speak from the cross as from a throne, and undertake from thence, not only to dispense pardons, but to dispose of seats in Paradise! DR. DODDRIDGE.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, Christ, Jehovah's shepherd: for these are the words of Jehovah, the Father, concerning his Son, whom he calls My Shepherd. By the *sword* awakened against him, is meant, the glittering sword of justice, which is called upon to *awake*, it seeming as though it was asleep; it having been a long time since the first sin of Adam was committed, for which satisfaction to Divine justice must be made. *Against the Man that is my fellow, saith the* LORD *of hosts.* The human nature of Christ is expressed by being the *fellow* of the LORD of hosts; not only being near to him in place and affection, but his equal, being truly a Divine person. *Smite the Shepherd:* the order is given to the sword of justice by the LORD of hosts, to smite the Messiah, the Shepherd, even unto death! DR. GILL.

Christ suffered in such a manner as a being perfectly holy could suffer. Though, animated by the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame, yet there appeared to have been seasons in the hour of his deepest extremity, in which he endured the entire absence of Divine joy and every kind of comfort or sensible support. What, but a total eclipse of the sun of consolation, could have wrung from him that exceedingly bitter and piercing cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" The fire of heaven consumed the sacrifice. The tremendous effects of God's manifested displeasure against sin he endured, though in him was no sin: and these he endured in a manner of which even those unhappy spirits who shall drink the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, will never be able to form an adequate idea! DR. J. P. SMITH.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. He dismissed his spirit. He himself willingly gave up that life which it was impossible for man to take away. It is not said that he *hung* on the *cross till he died* through pain and agony; nor is it said that his *bones* were *broken*, the *sooner* to put him out of pain, and to *hasten* his death; but that himself *dismissed the soul*, that he might thus become, not a *forced* sacrifice, but a *free-will offering for sin.*

Every man, since the fall, has not only been *liable* to death, but has *deserved* it; as all have forfeited their lives because of sin. Jesus Christ, as born immaculate, and having never sinned, had not *forfeited* his life, and therefore may be considered as naturally and properly immortal. *No man,* says he, *taketh it,* my life, *from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I* might *take it*

again.—John x. 17, 18. We translate *Luke* xxiii. 46. *O Father, into thy hands I commit my Spirit:* that is, I place my soul in thy hand; proving that the act was *his own;* that no man could take his life away from him; that he did not die by the *perfidy* of his disciple, or the malice of the Jews, but by his *own free act.* Thus HE LAID DOWN *his life for the sheep.* Of Ananias and Sapphira, *Act.* v. 5, 10, and of Herod, xii. 23, our translation says, They *gave up the ghost;* but the word in both places simply means to *breathe out,* to *expire,* or *die:* but in no case, either by the Septuagint in the *Old,* or any of the sacred writers in the *New* Testament is, *he dismissed his spirit,* or *delivered up his spirit,* spoken of any person but Christ. Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, &c. *breathed their last;* Ananias, Sapphira, and Herod *expired;* but none, Jesus excepted, *gave up the ghost, dismissed,* or *delivered up his own spirit,* and was, consequently, *free among the dead.*

DR. A. CLARKE.

I asked the heavens;—"What foe to God had done
This unexampled deed?"—The heavens exclaim,
"'Twas man;—and we in horror snatched the sun
From such a spectacle of guilt and shame."
I asked the sea;—the sea in fury boiled,
And answered with his voice of storms,—"'Twas man;—
My waves in panic at his crime recoiled,
Disclosed the abyss,—and from the centre ran."
I asked the earth;—the earth replied, aghast,
"'Twas man;—and such strange pangs my bosom rent,
That still I groan, and shudder at the past."
—To man, gay, smiling, thoughtless man I went,
And asked him next:—*He* turned a scornful eye,
Shook his proud head and deigned me no reply!

MR. MONTGOMERY.

"Father, the hour is come!" This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from an high altar, the blood was flowing, which washed away the guilt of the nations.

In this hour, the long series of prophecies, visions, types, and figures were accomplished. You may behold the Law and the Prophets standing, if we may speak so, at the foot of the cross, and doing homage. You behold Moses and Aaron bearing the ark of the covenant; David and Elijah presenting the oracle of testimony. You behold all the priests and sacrifices, all the rites and ordinances, all the types and symbols assembled together to receive their consummation. Without the death of Christ, the worship and ceremonies of the Law would have remained a pompous, but unmeaning institution. In the hour when he was crucified, every rite assumed its significancy; every prediction met its event; every symbol dis-

played its correspondence. Every remarkable event, every distinguished personage, under the Law, is interpreted in the New Testament, as bearing reference to this hour. If Isaac was laid upon the altar as an innocent victim; if David was driven from his throne by the wicked, and restored by the hand of God; if the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the people; if the rock was smitten by Moses, to furnish drink in the wilderness; all were types of Christ, and alluded to his death.

"It is finished." When Christ uttered these words, the Law ceased, and the Gospel commenced. This was the ever-memorable point of time which separated the old and the new world from each other. On one side of the point of separation, you behold the Law, with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side, you behold the Gospel, with its simple and venerable institutions, coming forward into view. Significantly was the veil of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubim. The legal high-priest delivered up his Urim and Thummim, his breast-plate, his robes, and his incense: and CHRIST stood forth as the great High-Priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice, which he now offered, he abolished sacrifices for ever. Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. "Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood, he now entered into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us."

DR. BLAIR.

IT IS FINISHED. The death of Christ, as his atonement presented to God, *exhibited the excellence of the Divine law: it manifested the holiness* and *the justice of God.* On many occasions has Jehovah displayed his hatred against sin. The destruction of the old world, the fire and brimstone that laid waste the cities of the plain, the calamities and captivities of the Jews, are striking indications of the essential purity of the Divine character. But we must ascend to Calvary to witness the most vivid, as well as the most unequivocal display of this perfection. We must see the man who was God's fellow—a being who, being personally considered, was spotless; who was not himself a sinner, but merely stood in the place of the transgressor—smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted,—we must see the rocks rending, and the graves opening, and the dead arising, in token of the unparalleled nature of the transaction, to form anything like an adequate idea of the Divine abhorrence of sin. In the cross of Christ we see the Father hiding his face from his Son,—his own Son, his only begotten Son, when bearing, by imputation only, the guilt of men, though himself uncontaminated by depravity! How unutterably opposed must then be the nature of God to all species and degrees of moral defilement!

DR. PAYNE.

God "laid on *his own Son* the iniquities of us all." It was necessary Christ should suffer for the redemption of lapsed man, and their reconciliation unto God; which was not otherwise to be performed than by a plenary

satisfaction to his will. He, therefore, was by all his sufferings made an expiation, atonement, and propitiation for all our sins. For salvation is impossible unto sinners without remission of sin; and remission, in the decree of God, impossible without effusion of blood. Our redemption, therefore, could not be wrought but by the blood of the Redeemer, but by a Lamb slain, but by a suffering Saviour.

Notwithstanding, therefore, that God loved men whom he created; yet he was offended with them when they sinned, and gave his Son to suffer for them. This reconciliation is clearly delivered in the Scriptures as wrought by Christ; for "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;" (2. *Cor.* v. 18;) and that by virtue of his death; for "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."—*Rom.* v. 10. But it is most evident that the life of Christ was laid down as a price; neither is it more certain that he died, than that he bought us: "Ye are bought with a price," saith the apostle, (1. *Cor.* vi. 20.—vii. 23;) and it is the "Lord who bought us," (2. *Pet.* ii. 1;) and the price which he paid was his blood; for "we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."—1. *Pet.* i. 18, 19. Now as it was the blood of Christ, so it was a price given by way of compensation: and as that blood was precious, so it was a full and perfect satisfaction. God is of infinite majesty, against whom we have sinned; and Christ is of the same Divinity, who gave his life a ransom for sinners: for God "hath purchased *his church* with his own blood."—*Acts.* xx. 28. BISHOP PEARSON.

Atonement cannot be made but by a substitute, unless the same end be answered by his interposition, as if the guilty had personally suffered. Now in the redemption of man, this end could never have been gained by the sufferings of a mere creature, whose obedience could have been no more than duty. But whilst the human nature of Jesus gave him a brother's right and interest in mankind, his Divine nature made his sacrifice available, and invested the law under which he placed himself, with a glory infinitely beyond what it could have acquired by the penal ruin of the race.

The Apostles and Prophets expatiate on his pre-eminent dignity, as Emanuel, and they never place the value of his sacrifice in mere suffering, nor do they infer it from the sovereign appointment of Heaven. Their object evidently is, to exhibit the dignity and glory of their Lord, and the hallowed principles of his character; and the value of his sacrifice they thus trace to his glory, as the Son of God. All his doings and his sufferings when he appeared, as our surety, were his personal acts. We are accordingly informed, that "he gave *himself* an offering and a sacrifice unto God," and that "by *himself* he purged our sins." And to the beloved disciple, his reviving and consolatory language was: "Fear not; I am the first and the last; the living one and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." In fine, the *Lamb* which was slain is declared to be worthy of blessing, and honour,

and glory, and power. We approach him as Emanuel, and as the great Mediator between God and man; and through him we worship the one Jehovah, who has revealed himself under the relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. DR. RUSSELL.

Adam is a type of Christ. How? In this respect: as the former was the cause of death to all his descendants, they did not (like him) eat of the forbidden fruit; so Christ is the cause, author, procurer of righteousness to all his seed, though they have not (like him) been personally obedient; even of that righteousness which he finished for us on the cross. For this reason,—*to ascertain and appropriate the honour of this righteousness to Christ, as a work not wrought in us, but completed for us on the cursed tree.* He insists and dwells upon that very remarkable circumstance, *One.* He iterates and reiterates the emphatical word *One.*—*Rom.* v. He introduces it again and again, and can hardly prevail upon himself to discontinue the repetition, As by *one man* sin entered into the world. Through the offence of *one* many be dead. Not as it was by one that sinned so is the free gift.—The judgment was by one to condemnation.—By *one* man's offence death reigned by *one.*—As by the offence of *one* judgment came upon all men unto condemnation.—As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners.—Thus the Apostle again and again introduces the word One, and can hardly prevail upon himself to discontinue the repetition, That if a Jew should ask how can the world be saved by the well doing of one, or by the obedience of Christ? You may be able to reply on his own principles, How could the world be condemned by the evil doing of one, or by the disobedience of Adam? ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride!

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood!

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown!

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul,—my life,—my all!

DR. WATTS.

CHRIST ENTOMBED.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.—*Isaiah* liii. 9.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

And now when the even was come, because it was the Preparation, that is the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.—*Mark* xv. 42-45.

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore [in Joseph's own new tomb, which he had hewn (*Luke* — in stone) out of a rock] because of the Jews' Preparation-day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand—*John* xix. 39-42. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.—*Matt.* xxvii. 60.

And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body

was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment.—*Luke* xxiii. 55, 56.

Now, the next day, that followed the day of the Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.—*Matt.* xxvii. 62-66.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

O, Saviour, the earth was thine, and the fulness of it; yet, as thou hadst not a house of thine own while thou livedst, so thou hadst not a grave when thou wert dead: Joseph, that rich counsellor, lent thee his, — lent it so as it should never be restored. Thou tookest it but for awhile; but that little touch of that sacred corpse of thine made it too good for the owner.

O, happy Joseph! thou hadst the honour to be landlord of the Lord of life! How well is thy house-room repaid with a *mansion not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!* Thy garden and thy tomb were hard by Calvary, where thou couldst not fail of many monitions of thy frailty. How gladly dost thou now resign thy grave to him, in whom thou livest, and who liveth for ever; whose soul is in Paradise, — whose Godhead is everywhere!

Thus, purely wrapped and sweetly embalmed, lies the precious body of our Saviour, in Joseph's new vault. Are ye now also at rest, O ye Jewish rulers? Is your malice dead and buried with him? Hath Pilate enough served your envy and revenge? Surely it is but a common hostility that can die; yours surviveth death, and puts you upon a further project: "The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure till the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen!"

How full of terrors and inevitable perplexities is guiltiness! Wicked and foolish Jews! how fain would ye fight against God and your own hearts! How gladly would ye deceive yourselves in believing him to be a deceiver, whom your consciences knew to be no less true than powerful! Lazarus was still in your eye. That man was no phantasm. His death,

his reviving, was undeniable. The so fresh resuscitation of that dead body, after four days' dissolution, was a manifestation of Omnipotence. How do ye vainly wish that he could deceive you in the fore-reporting of his own resurrection! Without a divine power, he could have raised neither Lazarus nor himself; with and by it he could as well raise himself as Lazarus.

And now what must be done? The sepulchre must be secured, and you with it. A huge stone, a strong guard, must do the deed; and that stone must be sealed, that guard of your own designing. Methinks I hear the soldiers and busy officers, how they boasted of their valour and vigilance, and said they would make him safe from either rising or stealing. Oh! the madness of impotent men, that think by either wile or force to frustrate the will and designs of the Almighty!

All this while the devout Marys keep close, and silently spend their Sabbath in a mixture of grief and hope. How did they wear out those sad hours in bemoaning themselves each to other; in mutual relations of the patient sufferings, of the happy expiration, of their Saviour, — of the wonderful events, both in the heavens and earth, that accompanied his crucifixion, — of his frequent and clear predictions of his resurrection!

BISHOP HALL.

After the crucifixion of our Lord, follows the account of his burial by Joseph of Arimathea, who went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus; and having obtained it, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. On this I shall make no other observation than that it was the exact fulfilment of a prophecy in Isaiah, where, speaking of the promised Messiah, or Christ, it is said, "He shall make his grave with the rich" (*Isai.* liii. 9): and accordingly Joseph, we are told, was a rich man and an honourable counsellor.

We see that the chief priests used every possible precaution to prevent a fraud; for this purpose they went to Pilate to beg for a guard, immediately after our Lord was buried. It is indeed here said, that they went *the next day that followed the day of Preparation*, the day on which Jesus was crucified. This looks, at the first view, as if the sepulchre had remained one whole night without a guard; but this was not so. The chief priests went to Pilate as soon as the sun was set on Friday, the day of the Preparation and crucifixion, — for then began the following day, or Saturday, as the Jews always began to reckon their day from the preceding evening. They had a guard therefore as soon as they possibly could, after the body was deposited in the sepulchre: and one cannot help admiring the wisdom of Providence in so disposing events, that the extreme anxiety of these men to prevent collusion should be the means of adding the testimony of *sixty* unexceptionable witnesses, the number of the Roman soldiers on guard, to the truth of the resurrection, and of establishing the reality of it beyond all power of contradiction. It is only necessary to add on this head, that the circumstance of *sealing the stone* was a precaution of

which several instances occur in ancient times, particularly in the prophecy of Daniel, where we read, that when Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

BISHOP PORTEUS.

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, begged the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. The Jews, as well as the Egyptians, added spices to keep the body from putrefaction, and the linen was wrapped about every part to keep the aromatics in contact with the flesh. From John xix. 39, 40, we learn that a mixture of myrrh and aloes of one hundred pounds' weight had been applied to the body of Jesus when he was buried: and that a second embalmment was intended, we learn from Luke xxiii. 56; xxiv. 1, as the hurry to get the body interred before the sabbath did not permit them to complete the embalming in the first instance.

He laid it in his own new tomb. To all human appearance, the body of Christ must have had the same burial-place with those of the two robbers, as *he was numbered with the transgressors*, and, according to a prophecy delivered nearly seven hundred years before that time, he is to have the burying-place of a rich man (see *Isai.* liii. 9-11). Had our Lord been buried in the common burial-ground of the malefactors, his resurrection could not have been so distinctly remarked, as the chief priests would never have thought of *sealing the stone* there, or *setting a watch;* but now that the body is got into the hands of a friend, they judge it necessary to make use of these precautions, in order, as they said, to prevent imposture; and, from this very circumstance the resurrection of Christ had its fullest evidence, and was put beyond the power of successful contradiction. What a number of objections would not human *prudence* have made to Joseph's conduct, had he consulted it on this occasion! It would have represented to him, that "this was to expose himself,—to bring himself into trouble,—to render himself suspected,—to put himself out of all capacity of doing good,—to ruin himself irrevocably; and, now, it could do no good to his teacher,—he is now *dead*, and needs no longer any office of kindness from men." There is sometimes in our whole life but *one* opportunity in which God designs *signally* to employ us; and, through our general backwardness to every good work, we are for reserving ourselves to opportunities, in which God neither *requires* nor will *accept* our services.

They (the priests) *made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.* The *guard* was to take care that the disciples should not steal him away; and the *seal*, which was probably the seal of the governor, was to prevent the guards from being corrupted so as to permit the theft. So everything was done which human policy and prudence could, to prevent a resurrection,—a resurrection which these very precautions had the most direct tendency to authenticate and establish. How wonderful are the wisdom and goodness of God!—and how true is it, that *there is neither might nor counsel against Him!*

DR. ADAM CLARKE.

How can the ancient predictions be fulfilled? Where shall "he make his grave,—with the wicked or with the rich, in his death" (*Isai.* liii. 1,) of crucifixion? By the providence of Him who did foretel it, it shall be fulfilled. To rescue the body of our blessed Saviour from the malicious hands of those who caused his crucifixion, "there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who went in boldly unto Pilate, and besought *him* that he might take away the body of Jesus." Beside, "there came also Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." Thus was the burial of the Son of God performed according to the custom of the people of God.

As for fulfilling the custom of the Jews as to the preparation in respect of his body, we find the *spices* and the *linen clothes*. When "there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she broke the box, and poured it on his head," *Christ* made this interpretation of that action: "She is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying."—*Mark* xiv. 3-8. When *Christ* was risen, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary brought the spices which they had prepared, that they might come and anoint him.—*Mark* xvi. 1—*Luke* xxiv. 1. Thus was there an interpreted and an intended unction of our Saviour, but really and actually he was interred with the spices which Nicodemus brought. The custom of wrapping in the clothes we see in Lazarus rising from the grave; for "he came forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin."—*John* xi. 44. In the same manner, when our Saviour was risen, "Simon Peter went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."—xx. 6, 7. Thus, according to the custom of the Jews, was the body of *Christ* bound in several linen clothes with an aromatical composition, and so prepared for the sepulchre.

As for the preparation of the sepulchre to receive the body of our Saviour, the custom of the Jews was also punctually observed in that. Joseph of Arimathea had prepared a place of burial for himself, and the manner of it is expressed: for "in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein never man was laid, which Joseph had hewn out of a rock for his own tomb: there laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre," and so *Christ* was buried after the manner of the Jews, in a vault made by the excavation of the rocky firm part of the earth, and that vault secured from external injury by a great massy stone rolled to the mouth or door thereof. After which stone was once rolled thither, the whole funeral action was performed, and the sepulture completed: so that it was not lawful by the custom of the Jews any more to open the sepulchre, or disturb the interred body.

Two eminent persons did concur unto the burial of our Saviour, a ruler and a counsellor, men of those orders among the Jews as were of the

greatest authority with the people, Joseph of Arimathæa, rich and honourable, and inferior to Nicodemus, one of the great Council of the Sanhedrim: these two, though fearful while he lived to acknowledge him, are brought by the hand of Providence to inter him; that so the prediction might be fulfilled which was delivered by Isaiah to this purpose. The counsel of his enemies, the design of the Jews, "made his grave with the wicked," that he might be buried with them which were crucified with him: but "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit within his mouth;" because he was no ways guilty of those crimes for which they justly suffered; that there might be a difference after their death, though there appeared little distinction in it; the counsel of the Father, the design of Heaven, put him "with the rich in his death," and caused a counsellor and a ruler of the Jews to bury him! BISHOP PEARSON.

Behold the restless and implacable malice of Christ's enemies, which pursued him even to his tomb, and there endeavoured to blast his memory by fixing upon him the character of an impostor. They demanded and procured a guard for his sepulchre. And here also we have a repeated instance of God's *taking the wise in their own craftiness.—Job* v. 13. Some have conjectured that they might also cement it with lead, or bind it with iron, but the sabbath would hardly have allowed this. The guard would prevent violence, and the seal would be a security against any fraud of theirs in confederacy with the disciples, if that could possibly have been suspected. This precaution might prevent any attempt, not only to remove the body, but to embalm it. For it is to be considered, that they had great reason to believe that, when two such eminent persons as Joseph and Nicodemus had already paid such a public honour to the corpse, they would desire also to embalm it; which accordingly they did really design. This would be such an additional reflection on the proceedings of the sanhedrim, as they would certainly desire to prevent. A mandate from Pilate for this purpose they could not be sure of obtaining, had they asked it; nor would an act of their own court have been free from uncertainty and inconvenience. This method of sealing the stone was, therefore, the most artful expedient that could be imagined; which would effectually prevent it, without letting it be publicly known that they had the least suspicion of any such design. Probably their design was on the fourth day to have opened the sepulchre, and have exposed the corpse to public view; which, had it been in their power, had been the most prudent step they could have taken. But they do not seem to have been mad enough to think, that if Jesus rose from the dead, it must be just when they thought fit to attend. DR. DODDRIDGE.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.—Psal. xvi. 10.

It was a part of the covenant of grace, and promised by the mouth of God's prophets, that after the death of the Messiah, his animal frame, נֶפֶשׁ, NEPHESH, should not continue, like those of other men, in the grave,

שאול, SHEOL, nor should corruption be permitted to seize on the body, by which all others were to be raised to incorruption and immortality. As members of Christ, this same promise and assurance is so far ours, that although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy, but shall be raised again, and reunited to its old companion the soul, which exists, meanwhile, in secret and undiscerned regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption, in his mystical, as he hath already done in his natural, body. BISHOP HORNE.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and he was buried."—1. *Cor.* xv. 3, 4. Who begged his body for interment? It was Joseph and Nicodemus. And, here we cannot help remarking these petitioners themselves. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called,"—but these men were of distinguished rank and condition in life. A few of these there have been in every age of the church: sufficient—to show, not that the cause of God depends upon *them*, but to redeem religion from the prejudice, that it suits the vulgar only, and also to prove the power of Divine grace, in counteracting temptation. Yet down to this period, Joseph and Nicodemus had not been persons of much promise: so far from it, they were ashamed and afraid to have their regard to our Lord known, when his disciples were professing their resolution to follow him to prison and to death. Behold the change!

Who attended as mourners? "The women, also, who came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid." With us, some days elapse before interment; but here, only two hours were allowed between his execution and his burial. If, indeed, his body had not been implored by Joseph and Nicodemus, it would have been interred at Golgotha—thrown into a hole, dug under the cross!

Who carried the sacred corpse, we know not; but they had not far to bear it, "for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." This was not a grave of earth, but of stone, and hewn out of a rock. Thus there was only one avenue leading to it; no one, therefore, could approach it from the sides, or behind; and the entrance was watched, guarded, and sealed. It was also a new tomb, in which never man was laid. And here, again, we see the hand of God: for had there been other bodies, some would have pretended collusion, and the evidence could not have been so simple and complete as it now was, when the body lay alone there. Finally; it was not his own. His followers are mad after the honours and riches of the world; but, living and dying, he had not where to lay his head. He was born in another man's house, and buried in another man's grave!

But why was he buried at all? *First.*—His burial was an additional confirmation of his death, upon which everything depended. An examination was made while he was upon the cross; and finding him dead already, they brake not his legs; but a soldier pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. But now his mouth, and nostrils, and ears were all filled with the odours and spices—and who can question

a man's death when he is buried? *Secondly.*—It was the completion of his humiliation. "They have brought me into the dust of death." "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended first into the lowest parts of the earth?" *Thirdly.*—By this he sanctified the grave, and prepared it for his people. They would have been afraid to go in, but he entered it before them. They can lie in his bed, after him. He has freed it from every horror. He has softened it, and made it easy for them.

"And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." Let us sit by them, and contemplate. *There* lies in that rock, He who made it. *There* are sealed up the lips which said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." *There* are closed the eyes which always beamed compassion, and wept for human woe. *There*, cold, are the hands which were laid on little children, to bless them, and that delivered the widow's son to his mother. *There* lies the Life of the world, and the Hope of Israel. He was "fairer than the children of men." He was "the image of the invisible God."—"He went about doing good."—"He was rich, and for our sakes, became poor."—

"Come saints, and drop a tear or two,
For him who groaned beneath your load:
He shed a thousand drops for you,
A thousand drops of richer blood."

REV. WILLIAM JAY.

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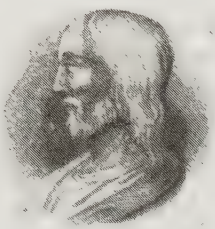

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2. Ornamental Initial A. . . . . MELVILLE.
3. Marriage Feast in Cana . . . . . MELVILLE.
4. Miraculous Draught of Fishes—(Head-piece) . . RAFAELLE.
5. Christ Walking on the Sea . . . . . SARGENT.
6. Christ Healing the Sick—(Head-piece) . . . . WEST.
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8. The Tribute Money—(Head-piece) . . . . CARAVAGGIO.
9. The barren Fig-Tree . . . . . SARGENT.
10. Christ raising Lazarus—(Head-piece) . . . . PIOMBO.
11. Christ raising the Widow's Son at Nain . . . . OVERBECK.
12. Christ and the Man in the Tombs—(Head-piece) . . . SARGENT.
13. Christ casting out Devils . . . . . RUBENS.
14. Christ curing Peter's Mother—(Tail-piece) . . . S. DE VOS.

The head of Christ on the Wrapper, from a medal supposed to have been struck by the early Christians.—*See Walsh on Christian Coins.*

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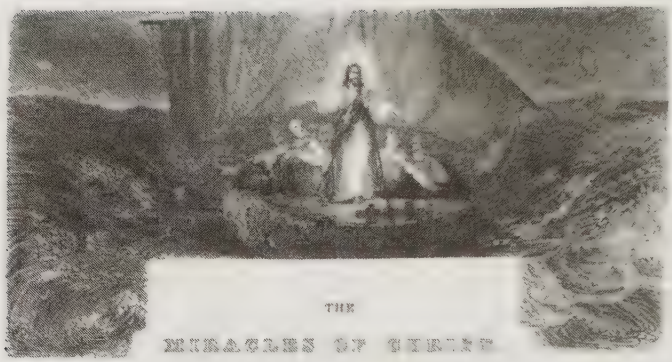

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS CREATION OF FOOD.

And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.—*Exod.* xvii. 35; *Josh.* v. 12.

They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.—*John* vi. 30, 31.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear

unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.—*John* ii. 1-11.

Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.—*John* vi. 7-14. See *Matt.* xiv. 13. 23; *Mark* vi. 34. 44; *Luke* ix. 12-17.

Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat. — How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat,

and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children.—*Matt.* xv. 32. 34. 38; *Mark* viii. 1-10. See *Matt.* xvi. 5-12.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

God endued Moses with a power of miracles, to be an evidence to Israel, "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hath appeared unto thee." And all along in the Old Testament, when God sent his prophets to make a new revelation, or upon any strange and extraordinary message, he always gave credit to them by some sign or wonder, which they foretold or wrought.

And when he sent his Son into the world, he gave testimony to him by innumerable great and unquestionable miracles, more and greater than all the prophets wrought. And there was great reason for this: because our Saviour came not only to publish a new form of religion to the world, but to put an end to that form of religion which God had instituted before. And now that the gospel hath had the confirmation of such miracles as never were wrought upon any other occasion, no evidence inferior to this can in reason control this revelation of the will of God.

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

Every miracle must have AN IMPORTANT END, AND WORTHY OF ITS AUTHOR, as to authorise a prophet, or to establish a revelation. An end so wise and so benevolent is well worthy of the Supreme Being.

This character of a true miracle is found in *all* the miracles recorded as being performed by Moses and Jesus Christ. None of them are represented as having been wrought on trivial occasions. The writers who mention them were eye-witnesses of the facts, which facts they affirm to have been performed publicly, in attestation of the truth of their respective dispensations. They are, indeed, so incorporated with these dispensations, that the miracles cannot be separated from the doctrines; and if the miracles were not really performed, the doctrines cannot be true. Further, the miracles of Moses and Jesus Christ were wrought in support of revelations which opposed all the religious systems, prejudices, and superstitions of the age. This circumstance alone sets them, in point of authority, infinitely above the pagan prodigies recorded by ancient writers, as well as the pretended miracles of the Romish church, many of which may be shown to be mere natural events, while others are represented as having been performed in secret, on the most *trivial* occasions, and long before the time of the writers by whom they are related. REV. T. H. HORNE.

Jesus Christ constantly speaks of himself as being, not an instrument only, but the AGENT, in works of miraculous power: and it is remarkable that, while the apostles manifested a studious anxiety to avoid using

language that could be construed into any representations of themselves above that of a powerless instrumentality, they ascribed the final agency to Christ as readily as to God the Father. The "signs and wonders" which sanctioned the ministry of Paul, and of which the number and variety were so great, that his modesty refused to speak of them beyond a slight and necessary allusion, he definitely attributes to Christ as their AUTHOR: "Christ wrought them through me." Here, therefore, are reasons for understanding our Lord's words as asserting *for himself* a power of Divine agency, and consequently the possession of Divine perfections. "I do the works of my Father, that ye may know and be assured that in me is the Father, and I in him!" DR. J. P. SMITH.

Our Lord was pleased to order the servants to fill these vessels with water, by which they became unexceptionable witnesses to the reality of the miracle: they obeyed without hesitation, and filled the water-pots "to the brim!" As soon as this was done, Jesus directed them to draw from them, and carry it to "the ruler of the feast," to set before the guests as wine! "The ruler of the feast" seems to have been a person chosen to maintain order on such occasions, as well as to see that all the guests had what they wanted; and some think that a Levite or priest was generally chosen for that purpose. When this person, therefore, had tasted this fresh supply of wine, without knowing how it was procured, he found it so excellent, that he expressed his surprise to the bridegroom at his having acted so differently from what others used to do on such occasions.

This was the beginning of Christ's miracles, by which he "manifested his glory:" an expression never used concerning the miracles of any prophet or apostle, and which could not properly have been used, — for they were only instruments, the power being of God, and for the display of his glory, which belonged to him alone: but Jesus wrought by his own power, as Emanuel, and displayed his "own glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This miracle, however, was not wrought publicly, or generally made known: yet it served to confirm the faith of the disciples in him, as the Son of God, and the promised Messiah.
REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

The manner in which this miraculous supply was furnished, impresses us with a conviction of the dignity of him by whom it was afforded: it was a power equal to that which brought water from the rock, and changed into blood the same elements in Egypt: it was creative energy which the Saviour exhibited. He who, by a natural process, changes the showers of the spring, imbibed by the earth, into the sap which nourishes the root, and ascends to the trunk and diffuses itself through the branches of the vine, and thus, ultimately, into the juice of the grape, which, when it is pressed, ferments and becomes wine, — by a silent unseen exertion of the same energy, in a miraculous way, and, independently of this process, changed immediately the simple element into the same costly beverage. Deception in this case was impossible. It is only necessary further to remark, that the

exertion of creative power is altogether consistent with the Scripture testimony, relative to the dignity, the character, the offices,—in one word, the Deity of Jesus Christ. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—*Col.* i. 16, 17.

The Evangelist might well say, that in this miracle he "manifested forth his glory," as it was thus a demonstration of his eternal power and Godhead. It was the third day after his interview with Nathanael, who is generally admitted to have been one of the party at this nuptial festivity. This pious and distinguished man, upon whom our Lord himself passed so high an eulogy, was not free from the little prejudices of a party spirit, and from bigoted partialities. Assuming that not any good thing could come out of Nazareth, he approached Jesus with feelings little disposed to determine in his favour; yet, he no sooner received an evidence of the omniscience of our Lord, than he acknowledged his mission, and paid homage to his dignity. On this occasion, Jesus promised that he should "see greater things than those" which had produced his conviction; and only three days after, the Saviour took occasion to exhibit his almighty power, by turning water into wine, when the faith of Nathanael unquestionably received a stability not to be shaken by any subsequent trial; and the effect produced upon the mind of this "Israelite indeed," extended itself to others; for of all his followers who were present, it is added, "his disciples believed on him." DR. COLLYER.

Was this then thy first miracle, O Saviour, that thou wroughtest in Cana of Galilee? And could there be a greater miracle than this,—that, having been thirty years upon earth, thou didst no miracle till now?—that thy divinity did hide itself in a corner of Galilee, unknown to those who, ever since thy "star," waited upon the revelation of a Messiah? O Saviour, none of thy miracles is more worthy of astonishment than thy not doing of miracles. What thou didst in private, thy wisdom thought fit for secrecy; but if thy blessed mother had not been acquainted with some domestical wonders, she had not now expected a miracle abroad.

The waiters could not but think strange of so unseasonable command, *Fill* the water-pots. "It is wine that we want: what, do we go to fetch water? Doth this holy man mean thus to quench our feast and cool our stomachs? If there be no remedy, we could have sought this supply unbidden." Yet so far hath the charge of Christ's mother prevailed, that instead of carrying flagons of wine to the table, they go to fetch pails full of water from the cisterns. It is no pleading of unlikelihoods, against the command of an all-mighty power. He that could have created wine immediately in those vessels, will rather turn water into wine. In all the course of his miracles, I do never find him making aught of nothing: all his great works are grounded upon former existences. He multiplied the bread, he changed the water, he restored the withered limbs, he raised the

dead; and still wrought upon that which was not. What doth he, in the ordinary way of nature, but turn the watery juice that arises up from the root into wine? He will only do this now suddenly and at once, which he doth usually by sensible degrees. It is ever duly observed by the Son of God, not to do more miracles than he needs.

There is a marriage whereto we are invited; yea, wherein we are already interested, not as the guests only, but as the bride, in which there shall be no want of the wine of gladness. It is marvel if, in these earthly banquets, there be not some lack. *In thy presence*, O Saviour, *there is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.* BISHOP HALL.

From this narrative we may learn, 1. that marriage is honourable, and that Jesus, if sought, will not refuse his blessing. 2. On such an occasion, the presence and approbation of Christ should be sought. No contract on earth enters so deeply into our comfort here: perhaps none will so much affect our destiny in the world to come. It should be entered into, then, in the fear of God. 3. On all such occasions, and others, our conduct should be such as that the presence of Jesus would be no interruption or disturbance. He is holy: he is always present in every place. That is not a proper state of feeling or employment which would be interrupted by the presence of the Saviour. In the very beginning of his ministry he worked a miracle which showed his benevolence. REV. ALBERT BARNES.

What flocking there was after Christ, which way soever he went! That our Saviour might approve him every way beneficent,—he that had filled the souls of his auditors with spiritual repast, will now fill their bodies with temporal,—and he, that had approved himself the universal Physician of his church, will now be known to be the great Householder of the world, by whose liberal provision mankind is maintained. He did not more miraculously heal, than he feeds miraculously.

The place was desert; the time, evening. Doubtless, our Saviour made choice of both these, that there might be both more use and more note of his miracle. The disciples think they move well: "Send them away, that they may buy victuals." Had they had victuals, they had not called for a dismission; and not having, how should they give? It was thy wisdom, O Saviour, thus to prepare thy disciples for the intended miracle! I hear thee not say, "I will give them to eat;" but, "Give ye;" as if it should be their act, not thine. Our Saviour hath what he would, an acknowledgment of their insufficiency: "We have here but five loaves and two fishes:" a poor provision for the family of the Lord of the whole earth! —five loaves, and those barley! two fishes, and those little ones!

I know not now whether more to wonder at, the miraculous eating or the miraculous leaving! Here were a whole host of guests,—five thousand men; and, in all likelihood, no fewer women and children. Perhaps some of these only looked on: nay, "they did all eat." Perhaps every man a crumb, or a bit: nay, they did eat to satiety; all were satisfied. So many

must needs make clean work; of so little there could be left nothing: yea, there were "fragments" remaining. Perhaps some crumbs or crusts, hardly to be discerned, much less gathered: nay, "twelve baskets full:" more remained than was first set down!

O work of boundless Omnipotency! Whether this were done by creation or by conversion, used to be questioned, but needs not. While Christ multiplies the bread, it is not for us to multiply his miracles. Shall the Israelites be fed with manna, Elijah by the ravens, the widow by her multiplied meal and oil, Christ's clients in the wilderness with loaves and fishes? O God, while thou dost lay us under obligation by thy providence, let us not wrong thee by distrust. BISHOP HALL.

Little or much is the same in the hands of Jesus Christ. Here was an incontestable miracle—*five thousand* men, besides women and children, fed with *five cakes* and *two fishes!* Here must have been a manifest *creation of substance:* the parts of the bread were not dilated to make them appear large, nor was there any delusion in the eating,—for they all *ate*, and were all *filled*. Here, then, is one miracle of our Lord attested by at least *five thousand* persons! But did not this creation of bread prove the unlimited power of Jesus? Undoubtedly; and nothing less than eternal power and Godhead could have effected it. This miracle is mentioned by all the four evangelists. It is one of the most astonishing that Christ has wrought. It is a miracle which could not be *counterfeited*, and a full proof of the divinity of Christ. DR. A. CLARKE.

We find from this evangelist [*John*] that the bread multiplied on this occasion was made of *barley*, though the promised land abounded with wheat. The multitudes expected that the Messiah would be a Prophet as well as a King: they had a temporary conviction, from the miracle which Jesus had wrought, that he was the Messiah; and they probably imagined that he would not be displeased to have a kind of constraint laid upon him to declare himself the expected King of Israel.

Blessed be our God that he has given us "the true Bread from heaven." May he create in us an appetite for it, that we may *intelligently and cordially* say, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread!" "The flesh of Christ is meat, indeed, and his blood is drink, indeed." Here the soul, which hungers and thirsts for God, for righteousness, and true felicity, and is made sensible of its state and wants, finds a suitable and abundant provision: here pardon, peace, hope, communion with God, and whatever can calm the conscience, serene and cheer the heart, or promote true holiness, is comprised in one glorious Object, a mighty Redeemer, "God manifest in the flesh," shedding his precious blood to atone for the sins of his rebellious creatures! This is that "living Bread, which came down from heaven, that we might eat and live for ever. Oh! how adorable, how stupendous, is this love of our divine Redeemer!

REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

Here we have a general account of Christ's cures.—*Matt.* xv. 30, 31. The tokens of Christ's power and goodness are neither scarce nor scanty; for there is in him an overflowing fulness. *They glorified the God of Israel*, whom the Pharisees, when they saw these things, blasphemed. Miracles, which are the matter of our wonder, must be the matter of our praise; and mercies, which are the matter of our rejoicing, must be the matter of our thanksgiving.

And here is a particular account of his feeding *four thousand men with seven loaves and a few little fishes*, as he had lately fed *five thousand* with five loaves. The guests, indeed, were not now quite so many as then, and the provision a little more, which does not intimate that Christ's arm was shortened, but that he wrought his miracles as the occasion required, and not for ostentation. When once the powers of nature are exceeded, we must say, *This is the finger of God.*

They did all eat and were filled. Those whom Christ feeds he fills. While we labour for the world, we labour for that which satisfieth not (*Isai.* lv. 2;) but those that duly wait on Christ shall be *abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house.*—*Psal.* lxv. 4. Christ thus fed people once and again, to intimate, that though he was called *Jesus of Nazareth*, yet he was of *Bethlehem*, the house of bread; or, rather, that he was himself the bread of life. Here were four thousand fed; but what were they to that great family which is provided for by the Divine care every day?

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

With what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded, as this story exhibits of his *feeding the four thousand!* Let us pause a little, and endeavour to paint him to our imagination, on this mountain, where the astonished multitude so justly extolled all these mingled wonders of power and grace. Let us reflect on the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, the deaf hearing, and the blind seeing, that with them we may glorify the God of Israel!

So evidently true is it, that *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!* How wonderful did the power of Christ appear, in thus multiplying the food!—and how amiable his compassion in his affectionate concern for the relief of his necessitous followers! May we learn in every state to be content!—*Phil.* iv. 11. In want, may we cheerfully trust Providence! In plenty, may we not wantonly abuse it!—but learn, by his command of gathering up the fragments even of this miraculous feast, a wise frugality in our enjoyments: that nothing may be lost, nor a reserve be wanting, by which the streams of future liberality may be fed! The disciples of Christ received from the hand of Christ the food they delivered to the people: and so should ministers be concerned, that they may receive from Christ what they dispense to others as the bread of life, and that they also at the same time may live upon it, as the support of their own souls. How great an honour is it to be employed as stewards of the mysteries of God!

DR. DODDRIDGE.

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS POWER OVER THE NATURAL WORLD.

Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.—*Exod.* vii. 17, 18.

And Moses cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.—*Exod.* xv. 25.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.—*Luke* v. 1-11.—See also *John* xxi. 1, 12.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money, came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them, for me and thee.—*Matt.* xvii. 24-27.

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away.—*Matt.* xxi. 17-20.—See also *Mark* xi. 11-21.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Simon was busy washing his nets, when the throng of auditors forced Christ to leave the shore, and to make Peter's ship his pulpit. While he was upon the land, he healed the sick bodies by his touch; now that he was upon the sea, he cured the sick souls by his doctrine. The honest fisherman, when he saw the people flock after Christ, and heard him speak with such power, could not but conceive a general apprehension of some excellent worth in such a teacher; and therefore is glad to honour his ship with such a guest; and is first Christ's host by sea, ere he is his disciple by land. A humble and serviceable entertainment of a Prophet of God, was a good foundation of his future honour. He, that would so easily lend Christ

his hand and his ship, was likely soon after to bestow himself upon his Saviour.

Simon hath no sooner done this service to Christ, than Christ is preparing for his reward. When the sermon is ended, the ship room shall be paid for abundantly; neither shall the host expect any other paymaster than himself: "Launch forth into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." That ship which lent Christ an opportunity of catching men upon the shore, shall be requited with a plentiful draught of fish in the deep. Rather in a desire to gratify and obey his guest, than to pleasure himself, will Simon bestow one cast of his net. Had Christ enjoined him a harder task, he had not refused; yet not without an allegation of the unlikelihood of success: "Master we have travailed all night, and caught nothing; yet, at thy word, I will let down the net." Not unjustly might Simon misdoubt his speed by day, when he had worn out the night in unprofitable labour. Sometimes God crosseth the fairest of our expectations; and gives a blessing to those times and means whereof we despair. That pains cannot be cast away, which we resolve to lose for Christ. "And when they had so done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their net brake." Never man threw out his net at the word of his Saviour, and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou dost so bountifully requite our weakest services?

Simon was a skilful fisher, and knew well the depth of his trade; and now perceiving more than art or nature in this draught, he falls down at the knees of Jesus, saying, "Lord, go from me, for I am a sinful man." Himself is caught in this net. He doth not greedily fall upon so unexpected and profitable a booty, but he turns his eyes from the draught to himself, from the act to the Author, acknowledging vileness in the one, in the other majesty. It had been pity the honest fisherman should have been taken at his word. O Simon, thy Saviour is come into thine own ship to call thee, to call others by thee unto blessedness. What is this divine trade of ours then, but a spiritual fishing? The world is a sea: souls, like fishes, swim at liberty in this deep: the nets of wholesome doctrine draw up some to the shore of grace and glory! The very first draught that Peter made, after the complement of his apostleship, enclosed no less than *three thousand* souls! O powerful gospel, that can fetch sinful men from out of the depths of natural corruption! O happy souls, that, from the blind and muddy cells of our wicked nature, are drawn forth to the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

BISHOP HALL.

"Jesus showed himself to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias;" (*John* xxi. 1.) as, after Christ was crucified, they returned, for a time, to their trade and employment of fishing; though they were called to be fishers of men. Afterwards, when, at the feast of Pentecost, they had received those visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, which did furnish them for preaching the gospel to all nations.

Observe how Peter, with the rest, *toil all night and catch nothing;* but no sooner is Christ come among them, but they enclose a multitude of fishes: thereby teaching us, that all human labours and endeavours are in

vain, unless Christ by his presence and blessing crown them with success. What a proof Christ here gives of his Divinity and Godhead! Christ our Mediator is true God; and as such he had a sovereign power and providence over all the creatures; the cattle on a thousand hills, and all the fish swimming in the sea, are obedient to his power, and observant of his commands.

What a complication of miracles were here! as soon as they came to land they discerned another miracle—"a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread,"—all created and produced by Christ out of nothing, at this time, as an evidence of Divine power: for, before they could get the fish to shore, they saw fish broiling upon coals, which makes it evident that these were none of the fish which they had caught. Christ, when he pleases, for the benefit and comfort of his people, will work miracle upon miracle, mercy upon mercy, one wonder upon the head of another: for here, after a miracle at sea, they met with another miracle at land!

This full draught of fishes, which Peter and the rest of the disciples now had, might probably presage that great and wonderful success, which he and they were afterwards to have in fishing for men. Here we have *a hundred and fifty and three great* fishes caught at one draught: but we find *three thousand* souls converted by one sermon of Peter.—*Acts* ii.

REV. W. BURKITT.

Christ first called these disciples when they were employed in the duties of their proper profession in life, and he now manifests himself to them while they were so engaged; (*John* xxi. 4-13.) perhaps particularly intending thereby to encourage an honest industry, in which indeed we are far more likely to enjoy his presence, and to converse with him, than when we throw away our time in idleness and inactivity.

Awhile he leaves them to labour in vain, that when the plentiful draught of fishes came, it might be the more remarkable. Sometimes he may deal thus with his ministers, in their endeavours to catch men; that we may be convinced thereby to whose power we owe our success, and may not *sacrifice* to our own *net, or burn incense to* our own *drag*.—*Hab.* i. 16.

All the disciples rejoiced at the appearance of their Lord; but Peter was the foremost to cast himself at his feet. Conscious that so much had been forgiven him, he is solicitous to show that he loves much. Let none imagine this miracle was merely intended for a demonstration of Christ's Divine power over all that *passeth through the paths of the sea*.—*Psal.* viii. 8. It was also the work of wisdom and bounty. By the sale of so many large and fine fishes, a seasonable provision was made for the *subsistence* of his disciples at Jerusalem, while they were *waiting for the descent of the Spirit*.—*Luke* xxiv. 49. Let every circumstance of this kind encourage us to trust him as the Lord of nature and of grace, who will withhold from us no necessary supply of either, while we are making it our humble and faithful care to promote his glory.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

"They that received the tribute-money;" in Talmudic language, *they that collect the shekels;* for not the publicans, or Roman tax-gatherers, are

meant. There was a tribute that was paid to Cæsar by the Jews; (See *Matt.* xxii. 17.) but that is expressed by another word, and was paid in Roman coin, which bore Cæsar's image and superscription: but this designs the collection of the half shekel, paid yearly for the service of the temple. The origin of this custom, was an order of the LORD to Moses, upon numbering the people; that every one that was twenty years of age and upwards, should give half a shekel, as atonement-money, or as a ransom for his soul; which was to be disposed of for the service of the tabernacle. —*Exod.* xxx. 12, 16. This does not appear to have been designed for a perpetual law, or to be paid yearly: in the time of Joash, King of Judah, a collection was made for the repairs of the temple, and the collection of Moses in the wilderness was urged by way of example: but no mention is made of the half shekel they should pay. In the time of Nehemiah, there was a yearly charge of the *third* part of a shekel, for the service of the temple; not by a Divine order, nor any law of Moses. From this it became fixed, that every year a half shekel should be paid by every Israelite, excepting women, children, and servants, towards the necessary charges of the temple service, and this obtained in the time of Christ. On the fifteenth of the month Adar, tables were placed, and collectors sat, in every city in Judea; so that we need not wonder that we hear of receivers of the half shekel at Capernaum. DR. GILL.

Peter, when asked if his master did not pay this tribute, answered at once that he did; knowing him to be ready for every act of piety and equity. But Jesus, preventing his mention of the subject by showing that he knew what had passed, asked him, of whom kings were accustomed to levy taxes; whether of their own children, or of strangers. *Children*, in this connexion, must be understood literally; and *strangers* must mean the children of others; for kings generally collect taxes from their subjects, though their own families be exempted. By this question he intimated, that as he was "the Son of God," the Lord of the temple, he had no right to contribute to the expenses there incurred, for the benefit of those who in themselves were strangers and enemies. "Our Saviour's argument, why he should not pay this tribute, as being the Son of that King to whom it was paid, holds not with reference to the other tribute paid to Cæsar, he being not the son of Cæsar, but of God."—*Whitby.* Lest, however, any should take offence at his refusal, as if regardless of the temple worship, he waved his privilege: and as he had no money, he ordered Peter to cast a hook into the sea, which was close by, and assured him that in the mouth of the first fish which he caught, he should find a piece of money, containing a shekel of silver, which would suffice for them both. By whatever means this piece of money was lodged in the mouth of the fish, *omniscience* alone could discover it there, and *omnipotence* ensure its being first brought to the hook of Peter! REV. T. SCOTT.

Our Lord's eye pierced through the whole world of waters; discerned the fish that had just swallowed a piece of silver-coin, and guided its course to Peter's hook. It is true, when the gatherers of the *sacred tax* came to

collect his share for the reparation of the temple, he had not a sufficiency of money to satisfy so small a demand; yet he takes occasion, from this most abject poverty, to manifest the immensity of his riches. He makes the deep his *revenue*, and bids the scaly nations bring him their *tribute*. Never was such indigence associated with such magnificence! Never, never let us forget, that the indigence was ours, the magnificence all his own!

How wonderful is this seemingly little miracle! or rather, what a *cluster* of wonders is comprised in this *single* act!—That any fish, with money in its mouth, should be catched,—with money just of such a value,—and in the very first fish that offered itself! What a pregnant display of *omniscience* to know, of *omnipotence* to over-rule, all these *fortuitous* incidents!

Rev. J. Hervey.

I see no reason to suppose this piece of money was created on this occasion: but supposing that the fish had accidentally swallowed it, (perhaps as it was falling into the water, near some other prey,) I cannot forbear remarking how illustrious a degree of knowledge and power our Lord discovered in the case before us; knowledge, in penetrating into the bowels of this animal, though in the sea; and power, in directing this particular fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance. Hardly any circumstance can be imagined more fit to encourage him and his brethren in a firm dependance on Divine providence. And it is very natural to reflect how easily Christ could, if he had seen fit, have drawn up immense treasures, by this very method, from the heart of the sea: but he intended that his servants should be enriched and adorned in a much nobler manner than with pearls and costly array. That extent of knowledge and power which our Lord displayed on this occasion, can be at no loss for means to repay whatever we may sacrifice for his sake.

Dr. Doddridge.

What an affecting mixture of glory and abasement was there in Christ's appearance on earth! He shone in the majesty of God; was attended with glorified saints; was avouched and owned by his Father's immediate voice; and the disciples saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: and yet for our sakes he became so poor as not to have a shekel to spare, without a miracle to provide it! O glorious and condescending Saviour! He that could command a fish to come to Peter's hook, with a piece of money, which either by his omniscience he knew was in its mouth, or by his omnipotence he put into it, could easily have supplied himself with all the stores and riches of nature; and he that raised himself from the dead, could easily have prevented his sufferings and death, if he had not chosen to submit to them. But, as his Father had in eternal counsels determined, he freely consented to them, that he might glorify him on earth, and bring redemption to his people.

Dr. Guise.

Jesus left "the chief-priests and scribes" confounded and put to silence, and went out of Jerusalem; partly to remove all suspicion of seizing the

city and government, and setting himself up as a temporal prince. He went to Bethany to converse with his dear friends, Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, who were all of this place, and where he could lodge and rest quietly. Christ went with the twelve to Bethany, as Mark affirms, so these returned with him, as is clear from what follows. Thus Christ, day after day, went to and from Jerusalem: in the evening he went to Bethany, or to some part of the Mount of Olives, and there abode all night, and returned in the day-time to Jerusalem, and taught in the temple: for it does not appear that he was one night in Jerusalem before the night of the passover. *He hungered;* which proves the truth of his human nature. "*And* when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only." Mark says, "He came, if haply he might find any thing thereon;" which must be understood of him as man; for as he hungered as man, so he judged and expected as man, from the appearance of this fig-tree, that he might find fruit upon it; and which is no contradiction to his Deity, and his having the Spirit of God; especially since, as Bishop Kidder observes, such an expectation is attributed to God himself. —*Isai.* v. 2-4.

Christ did not expect to find figs on other trees, which he saw in abundance as he passed along, because the time of common ordinary figs being ripe, was not come. Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, is the time of the putting forth of leaves, from which they reckon five full months before the figs are ripe: but this being full of leaves, appeared to be of a different kind from other fig-trees, and of that sort which they call *Benoth Shuach*, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, which were a kind of white figs that were not ripe till the third year. This tree put forth its fruit the first year, which hung on it the second, and were brought to perfection on the third: so that when it was three years old, it had fruit of the *first*, *second*, and *third* years on it: or it might be one of that sort which brought forth fruit twice a year; for of such sort of fig-trees we read in the Jewish writings. But there being no fruit on it, Jesus said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever."

Christ having said these words, its sap was dried up, it lost its verdure; its leaves were shrivelled and shrunk up, and dropped off, and the whole was blasted. This tree was an emblem of the Jews: Christ being hungry, and very desirous of the salvation of men, came first to them, from whom, on account of their large profession of religion, and great pretensions to holiness, and the many advantages they enjoyed, humanly speaking, much fruit of righteousness might have been expected; but alas! he found nothing but mere words, empty boast, an outward show of religion, a bare performance of trifling ceremonies, and oral tradition: wherefore Christ rejected them; and, in a little time after, the kingdom of God, the gospel, was taken away from them, and their temple, city, and nation entirely destroyed!

DR. GILL.

Christ's miracles hitherto were all wrought for the good of men, and proved the power of his grace and blessing (the sending of the devils into the herd of swine was but a permission:) but now, at last, he would give

a specimen of his curse; yet not on any man, woman, or child, *because the great day of his wrath* is not yet come; but on an inanimate tree, set forth for an example. "Come learn a parable of the fig-tree."—*Matt.* xxiv. 32. The scope of it is the same with the parable of the fig-tree, Luke xiii. 6.

This cursing of the barren fig-tree represents the state of hypocrites in general; and so it teaches us, that Christ looks for the power of religion from those that make profession of it. Christ's just expectations from flourishing professors are often disappointed. As one of the chiefest blessings, and which was the first in order, is, *Be fruitful;* so one of the saddest curses is, *Be no more fruitful!* A hypocritical professor commonly withers in this world, the effect of the curse of Christ!

This cursing of the fig-tree represents the state of the nation and people of the Jews in particular: they were a fig-tree planted in Christ's way, as a church. Now, observe the disappointment they gave to our Lord Jesus. They "called Abraham their father; but did not do the works of Abraham;" they professed themselves expectants of the Messiah, but, when he came, they did not receive and entertain him. Never any good came from them, (except the particular persons among them that believed,) after they rejected Christ: they became worse and worse; till they were unchurched, and their place and nation rooted up; their beauty was defaced, their temple, and priesthood, and sacrifices, and festivals, and all the glories of their church and state, fell like leaves in autumn. How soon did their fig-tree wither away, after they said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

REV. M. HENRY.

The immediate use made of this withering of the fig-tree, was to confirm the faith of the apostles, by an evident example of that power, a share of which was to be communicated to themselves. You have witnessed the power of God. Have faith in him: ask in such faith, and ye shall be enabled to exercise such power. But though our Lord seized the opportunity of this miracle for the confirmation of his apostles' faith, its significant nature was intended to indicate the judgment of which this and the three succeeding chapters are full, the rejection of the Jewish nation. It declares the accomplishment of Isaiah's prophecy, *Isai.* v. 3-5. The Lord had come, "seeking fruit of the fig-tree planted in his vineyard:" it bore an outward profession; its leaves were flourishing; as the "Jew rested in the law, and made his boast of God." But when *he came to it, he found nothing thereon, but leaves only;* a mere profession. So the day of utter destruction was at hand; *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever!*"

We must remember, that the dealings of God with nations are a specimen of his dealing with individuals. God applies the culture of his word, and distils the dew of his grace upon the heart: and he expects that "the earth should drink in the rain that falleth oft upon it, and bring forth herbs meet for him by whom it is dressed."—*Heb.* vi. 7.

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS RESTORATION OF THE DEAD TO LIFE.

And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother; and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth! And the woman said to Elijah, Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God.—1 *Kings* xvii. 22-24. See 2 *Kings* iv. 18. 36.

For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.—*John* v. 21.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.—*Rev.* i. 18.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, [Nain,] behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.—*Luke* vii. 12-16.

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.—While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to

him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called and said, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished; but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.—*Luke* viii. 41, 42. 49-56. See *Matt.* ix. 18-26; *Mark* v. 22-43.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.—Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. — Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.—*John* xi. 1. 5. 38-44.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Jesus went about *healing every infirmity of the people*; though he did not rest his claim to be a worker of miracles on his power of healing *alone*.

His history furnishes us with a variety of works performed by him, the performance of which was indisputably beyond the reach of any *natural causes*. For, can any power of natural causes *convert water into wine?* Can it be possible, in a natural way, to feed thousands with a few small loaves and fishes, and so as that the fragments left should greatly exceed the original quantity of food? Could it be owing to any natural cause that Jesus walked on the sea, and caused the tempest to cease at his command? In a word;—who can be so perverse as to affirm, that *the dead could be raised from their graves*, and the spiritual principle reunited to the lifeless corpse, but by the interposition of the same cause which at first breathed into the inanimate clay the breath of life? All these and many other such facts, recorded of Jesus, are in their own natures miraculous: but I see not why we should not insist upon all his cures as so many miracles: for I should look upon it as the height of absurd scepticism to doubt whether Jesus could cure the paralytic or the blind, when *we see him raising Lazarus*,—the *widow's son*,—the *ruler of the synagogue's daughter*,—and, lastly, *himself, from the dead!*

Besides, that Jesus laid claim to miracles may be inferred from the character which we are as certain he assumed as we are certain he existed—I mean that of his being the Messiah expected by the Jews. For as the Messiah was marked in their prophecies as one who should perform miracles, the claim of Jesus to be this illustrious person necessarily supposes a claim to those extraordinary works which the Messiah was expected to perform. Add to this, that the great fundamental doctrine of Christianity,—the redemption of mankind *by Christ's dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification*, supposes a *miracle* the most striking that can be imagined. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead must have been publicly asserted wherever Christianity was preached,—for it is the very cornerstone of the religion. *If Christ be not risen from the dead, both the preaching of the Apostle, and the faith of the convert, would have been in vain!*

BISHOP DOUGLAS.

God, under the Old Testament, raised one by Elijah, another by Elisha living, a third by Elisha dead. By the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament, he raised the son of the widow, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus; and, in attendance of his own resurrection, he made a gaol-delivery of holy prisoners at Jerusalem. He raised the daughter of Jairus from her bed, the widow's son from his coffin, Lazarus from his grave, the dead saints at Jerusalem from their rottenness,—that it might appear no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his overruling command.

Our Saviour's favours were, at the least, continuous. No sooner hath he raised the Centurion's servant from his bed, than he raises the widow's son from his bier. His providence hath so contrived his journey, that he meets with the sad pomp of a funeral. A woeful widow, attended with her weeping neighbours, is following her only son to the grave. When God would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can fall into the miserable, he can but say, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with

sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation!"—*Jer.* vi. 26. Such was the loss, such was the sorrow, of this disconsolate mother.

Here was a conspiration of all parts to mercy: the heart had compassion; the mouth said, "Weep not;" the feet went to the bier; the hand touched the coffin; the power of Deity raised the dead. I do not see our Saviour stretching himself upon the corpse, as Elijah and Elisha upon the sons of the Shunamite and Sareptan; nor kneeling down and praying by the bier, as Peter did to Dorcas: but I hear him so speaking to the dead, that by the word he makes him alive—"I say unto thee, Arise!" How soon is that funeral banquet turned into a new birth-day feast! How gladly did every tongue celebrate both the work and the Author! "A great prophet is raised up amongst us, and God hath visited his people!"

BISHOP HALL.

The sacred historian paints one of the deepest *mourning pieces* extant in all the productions of the pen, in all the simplicity of style, yet with all the strength of colouring. When "Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every fresh circumstance widens the wound,—aggravates the calamity, till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsolable distress.

He was a *young man*, cut off in the flower of life, amidst a thousand gay expectations and smiling hopes. A son, an *only son*, the afflicted mother's all,—so that none remained to preserve the name, or perpetuate the family. What rendered the case still more deplorable, *she was a widow*, left entirely desolate, abandoned to her woes, without any to share her sorrows or comfort her under the irreparable loss. Is not this a fine sketch of the *impassioned* and *picturesque?* Who can consider the narrative with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration.—*Luke* vii. 11.

REV. J. HERVEY.

See how triumphant Christ's commands are, over even death itself. "He came and touched the bier" on which the dead body lay; hereby intimating that he had something to say to the dead young man. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom."—*Job* xxxiii. 24. "They that bare him stood still;" and then with solemnity, as one to whom belong the issues from death, Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The young man was *dead*, and could not arise by any power of his own; yet it was no absurdity for Christ to bid him *arise*, when a power went along with the word to put life into him. The gospel call to all people, to young people particularly, is, "Arise, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light and life."

Christ's dominion over death was evidenced by the immediate effect of his word: "He that was dead sat up" without any help. Christ put life into him, and made it appear by his sitting up. Have we grace from

Christ? Let us show it. Another evidence of life was, that "he began to speak:" so Christ, giving spiritual life, opens the lips in prayer and praise. He would not oblige this young man, to whom he had given a new life, to go along with him, either as his disciple to minister to him, much less as a trophy or show to get honour by him; but "delivered him to his mother," to attend her as a dutiful son: for Christ's miracles were miracles of mercy,—and a great act of mercy this was to this widow: now she was comforted, looking on her son as a particular favourite of heaven!

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

While Jesus was walking to the house of Jairus, thronged by the surrounding multitude, he wrought a miracle, in healing a woman who had been afflicted with an issue of blood for twelve years.—*Luke* viii. 43-49.

This transaction occasioned delay, and, no doubt, increased the anxiety of Jairus: but his trial was much greater when messengers came to inform him that his daughter was dead. Jesus heard this, but exhorted Jairus not to disquiet himself, "only to believe" that he was *able* to restore his daughter, and would certainly bring her again to life. He dismissed even all his disciples, except Peter, James, and John, that he might be attended by a competent number of witnesses. He found that the mourners and minstrels had already been called in, as was customary, some playing mournful tunes, and others uttering the most doleful lamentations. Jesus forbad them to weep; but they, knowing that she was really dead, treated his words with contempt; he therefore put them all out of the room, after he had drawn from them this attestation of her death; and, having none with him but the parents of the damsel and his three apostles, he took hold of her hand, and said aloud, as having power over death, and the spirits of the dead, "Damsel, arise!" and immediately she arose and walked, to the inexpressible astonishment of the spectators, and doubtless the exceeding joy and gratitude of her before afflicted parents. So much compassion and condescension did our Saviour show to the feelings of natural affection, that it is worthy of observation,—of the *three* persons whom Christ is particularly recorded to have raised from the dead, one was the *only* son of a widow, another the *only* daughter of Jairus, and the third, the *beloved brother* of Martha and Mary.

REV. T. SCOTT.

How troublesome did the people's importunity seem to Jairus! That great man came to see Jesus for his dying daughter. There was hope in her sickness; in her extremity there was fear; in her death, despair, as they thought, of help. "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master."

Infidelity is all for ease, and thinks every good work tedious. O Saviour, it was thy meat and drink to do thy Father's will: it cannot be thy trouble which is our happiness. The messenger could not so whisper his ill news but Jesus heard it. Jairus hears: but he, whose work it is to comfort the afflicted, rouseth the dejected heart of that pensive father. "Fear not; believe only, and she shall be made whole:"—alive from her death —whole from her disease! Thou dost not, O Saviour, measure thy gifts

by our petitions, but by our wants and thine own mercies. Christ will go to the place, that he might be confessed the Author of so great a miracle. O Saviour, thou lovest to go to the house of mourning: thy chief pleasure is the comfort of the afflicted.

What a confusion there is in worldly sorrow! The minstrels howl and strike dreadfully. Soon doth our Saviour charm this noise, and turn these unseasonable mourners out of doors. "Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Before the people and domestics of Jairus held Jesus for a prophet; now they took him for a dreamer: "Not dead, but asleep!" "And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." What did these scorners think and say, when they saw him putting the minstrels and people out of doors? Those that are shut out from the participation of God's counsels, think all his words and projects no better than foolishness. But art thou, O Saviour, ever the more discouraged by the derision and censure of these scornful unbelievers? Because fools jeer thee, dost thou forbear thy work? "He took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise; and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway." Death cannot but obey him who is the Lord of life. The soul is ever equally in his hand who is the God of spirits. O Saviour, bid my soul to arise from the death of sin!

BISHOP HALL.

O Saviour, the raising of Lazarus was one of thy last, so of thy greatest miracles. Other miracles do not more transcend nature, than this transcends other miracles. This alone was a sufficient eviction of thy Godhead, O blessed Saviour! Jesus heard the first groan of Lazarus; yet this Lord of life lets his Lazarus sicken and die. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

O Saviour, thy usual style is, the "Son of man" — willing thus to hide thy Godhead under the coarse weeds of our humanity: but here thou sayest, "That the Son of God might be glorified." To die was an act of the Son of man; to raise from death was an act of the Son of God.

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." What a sweet title is here, both of death and of Lazarus! Death is a sleep; Lazarus is our friend: what doth this import but, "Ye are my friends, and Lazarus is both my friend and yours?"—*Our Friend!*

Since our Saviour saw himself not rightly construed, he delivers himself plainly, "Lazarus is dead." Such is thy manner, O thou Eternal Word of thy Father! The absence of our Saviour from the death-bed of Lazarus was voluntary: "I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there." Christ was glad of it, for the advantage of his disciples' faith.

Martha had been well catechized before. Even she also had sat at Jesus' feet, and can now give good account of her faith in the power and Godhead of Christ,—in the certainty of a future resurrection. Mary now falls at the feet of Jesus before all her neighbours of Jerusalem. It was no less than excommunication for anybody to confess him; yet good Mary, not fearing the information that might be given by these Jewish gossips,

adores him; and, in her silent gesture, says, as her sister had spoken, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God!" Her humble prostration is seconded by a lamentable complaint,—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" This was Mary's moan: no request sounded from her to her Saviour.

O Saviour, while thou speakest to thy Father, thou liftest up thine eyes: now thou art to speak unto dead Lazarus, thou liftest up thy voice,—"Lazarus, come forth!" How familiar a word is this! He doth not say, "Lazarus, revive!"—but, as if already living, "Lazarus, come forth!" Thou didst not only, O Saviour, raise the body of Lazarus, but the faith of the beholders. What strange salutations do we think there were betwixt Lazarus and Christ: betwixt Lazarus and his sisters! I leave them entertaining each other with discourses of reciprocal admiration, with praises and adoration of that God and Saviour that had fetched him into life!

BISHOP HALL.

"He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." From this and other passages, it would appear that the mode of preparing the bodies of the dead for the sepulchre was nearly the same as still exists in western Asia. No coffins being used, the body itself is more elaborately wrapped and swathed, than is common or desirable where coffins are used. In this method the body is stretched out, and the arms laid straight by the sides, after which the whole body, from head to foot, is wrapped round tightly in many folds of linen or cotton cloth. The body, when thus enfolded and swathed, retains the profile of the human form; but, as in the Egyptian mummies, the legs are folded together: hence it is clearly impossible for a person thus treated to move his arms or legs, if restored to existence. But then, how could Lazarus, if thus "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," come forth at the command of the Saviour?

Ancient sepulchres were commonly recesses excavated *in the sides* of caverns: and it appears that the body of Lazarus lay in a recess of this description, the body being introduced with the head foremost, the feet turned towards the cavern: so that we may readily understand, that when that loud voice, which even Death heard, cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" the dead man worked himself out of the recess, and, sliding down, stood on his feet on the floor of the cavern. For, *after* he had "come forth," our Saviour, referring to the grave-clothes with which he was bound, said, "Loose him, and let him go." Our Lord directed that the bandages in which he was tightly swathed should be loosed, to enable him to walk, and leave the sepulchre.

PICTORIAL BIBLE.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God at Bethany; and in the resurrection of Lazarus thus corrupted, and thus raised by the powerful call of Jesus, we have a striking emblem, and a glorious earnest, of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

Such an extraordinary power displayed before the face of a multitude, and near to Jerusalem, even overcame the prejudices of some of the most obstinate among them. Many believed that Jesus could be no other than the great Messiah, so long promised; though others, who still expected a temporal prince, and therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, particularly the chief priests and elders.

"There gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."—*John* xi. 47, &c. Accordingly they came to a resolution to put him to death. This resolution was not, however, unanimous; for Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and other disciples of our Saviour, then members of the council, urged the injustice of what they proposed to do, from the consideration of his miracles and innocence. But Caiphas, the high priest, from a principle of human policy, told them, that government often required certain acts of injustice to procure the safety of the state. "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."—*John* xi. 49-50. The council determined to put Jesus to death, and, in all probability, agreed to issue a proclamation, promising a reward to any person who would deliver him into their hands!

DR. FLEETWOOD.

Such was the effect of this illustrious miracle that *many of the Jews, who had come to* visit *Mary, and beheld what Jesus did*, were so affected with this marvellous instance of his power, that they *believed on him* as the Messiah. *But some of them* obstinate and perverse, *went away to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had* done, to prevent his growing influence among the people. *The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees*, united in their enmity to Christ, being alarmed at the information, *convened the Sanhedrim*, the great council of the Jewish nation. Where shall we find such restless, such causeless, such incorrigible malice, as was in the hearts of these rulers against our blessed Saviour?

DR. DODDRIDGE.

We have simply produced, in the order, and with the circumstances in which they are recorded, the *three* leading instances of our Lord's dominion over death during his pilgrimage: the encouraging inferences deducible from them, as a pledge of our own resurrection, will properly be considered in connection with the resurrection of Christ. You cannot but have remarked that the whole of these miracles were performed before multitudes of people, not interested in extending the fame of Jesus, some of whom were his implacable enemies! It cannot have escaped you, that these miracles bear the same characters of grandeur and of benevolence, which should distinguish miracles wrought in support of a Divine revelation; and they were adapted, nay, absolutely necessary, to prove the mission of the Messiah!

DR. COLLYER.

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS POWER OVER THE ELEMENTS.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided.—*Exod.* xiv. 21.

And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed over Jordan.—*Josh.* iii. 17.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.—*John* v. 17.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit: and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I: be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth

his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.—*Matt.* xiv. 22-33. See *Mark* vi. 46-52; *John* vi. 16-21.

And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship: and there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the winds, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?—*Mark* iv. 35-41. See *Matt.* viii. 23-27.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Christ dismissed the multitude, after he had fed them miraculously, lest they should "take him by force and make him a king"—(*John* vi. 15); but himself retired for prayer. Though Christ, as God, was Lord of all, and was prayed to, yet Christ, as man, had "the form of a servant," and prayed. Christ has herein set before us an example of secret prayer, and the performance of it secretly. Observe, when the disciples went to sea, their Master went to prayer; when Peter was to be "sifted as wheat," Christ prayed for him.

Christ "went unto them, walking on the sea." This is a great instance of Christ's sovereign dominion over all the creatures; they are all under his feet, and at his command; they forget their natures, and change their qualities that we call essential. We need not inquire how this was done, —whether by condensing the surface of the water, (when God pleases, "the depths are congealed in the heart of the sea,"—*Exod.* xv. 8.) or by expanding the gravitation of his body, which was transfigured as he pleased, — it is sufficient that it proves his divine power, for it is God's prerogative to "tread upon the waves of the sea," (*Job* ix. 8.) as it is to "ride upon the

wings of the wind." He that "made the waters of the sea a wall for the redeemed of the LORD," (*Isai.* li. 10.) here makes them a walk for the Redeemer himself, who, as Lord of all, appears with one foot on the sea and the other on dry land.—*Rev.* x. 2. The same power that made iron to swim, (2 *Kings* vi. 6) did this. "What ailed thee, O thou sea?"—(*Psal.* cxiv. 5:)—it "was the presence of the Lord. Thy way, O God, is in the sea!"—lxxvii. 19. REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

The fourth watch of the night began three hours before sunrise; and, during these three hours, Jesus came to the disciples,—perhaps after day-break. Note, that to walk on the sea is made the property of God, "who alone spreadeth the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea."—*Job* ix. 8.—*Whitby.* "The picture of two feet walking on the sea, was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossible thing."—*Doddridge.* It was, no doubt, an attestation that he was the God of Nature, the Lord of the creation; and also an emblem of his power over all the troubles and persecutions which disquiet his church. REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

The waves rose, but he trod them down; the raging sea murmured under the footsteps of its Lord; but, willing, or unwilling, it must bear him. Thus, when the swelling powers of this world rise, our Lord shall trample them down. But when he says, "I am He, not a phantom, as you suppose, but really what you see;" Peter says, "Lord, if it is thou, order me to come to thee upon the waters." If it is thou, I do not wonder that thou suspendest solid flesh upon the backs of the liquid waves; for, what wonder if the creature waits upon its Creator? Therefore I should not wonder, should I do that at which I may wonder. I know, Lord, that a human body is not suffered, by the laws of Nature, to have fixed footsteps upon the liquid waves; but let thy gift of grace be afforded, and that law of Nature shall cease for awhile. Thou hast chosen to take of me, infirmity, in that flesh which thou bearest; grant that I may have from thee power that the waves shall bear me! ST. AUGUSTINE.

"They were troubled, saying, It is a spirit." The Jews, especially the sect of the Pharisees, had a notion, from whom the disciples might have theirs,—of spirits, apparitions, and demons, being to be seen in the night; hence that rule, "It is forbidden a man to salute his friend in the night, for we are careful, lest it should be a demon." They say many things of one "Lilith," a she-demon, that used to appear in the night, with a human face, and carry off young children, and kill them. Some such frightful notions had possessed the minds of the disciples, "and they cried out for fear,"—as persons in consternation, in the greatest danger, through a vulgar notion among seafaring-men, that such sights are ominous to sailors.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them," as one truly affected towards them, and concerned for their welfare: he called aloud unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid;" don't be affrighted at my

apppearance, from whom you have nothing to fear; nor be afraid of the storm and tempest in which you are, I'll deliver you; for it is I, your Master, Saviour, and Redeemer, and not any hurtful spirit.

Christ may be sometimes near his people, and they not know him; as the Lord was in the place where Jacob was, and he knew it not (*Gen.* xxviii. 16); and as Christ was standing by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and she took him to be the gardener: and for want of a distinct knowledge of Christ, in his person, offices, and grace, persons have wrong apprehension of him, filled with dread and fear, concluding they have no interest in him; that he is a Saviour, but not of them; but Christ makes himself known unto them, as the able and willing Saviour, and as their Saviour and Redeemer. DR. GILL.

All elements are alike to their Maker. He that had well approved his power on the land, will now show it in the air and the water. He that had preserved the multitude from the peril of hunger in the desert, will now preserve his disciples from the peril of the tempest in the sea.

How do all things seem to conspire to the vexing of thy poor disciples! The night was sullen and dark; their Master was absent; the sea was boisterous; the winds were high and contrary. Had their Master been away, yet if the sea had been quiet or the winds fair, the passage might have been endured: now both the season, and sea and wind, and their Master's desertion, had agreed to render them perfectly miserable. O Saviour, our extremities are the seasons of thine aid. Thou camest at last; but yet so, as that there was more dread than joy in thy presence. Thy coming was both miraculous and frightful!

Thou, God of elements, passedst through the air, — walkedst upon the waters! Whether thou meantest to terminate this miracle in thy body, or in the waves which thou trodest upon; whether so lightening the one, that it should make no impression in the liquid waters, or whether so consolidating the other, that the pavemented waves yielded a firm causeway to thy sacred feet to walk on, I neither determine nor inquire: thy power was in either miraculous.

What object should have been so pleasant to the eyes of the disciples as their Master; and so much the more as he showed his Divine power in this miraculous walk? But lo, contrarily, "they are troubled:" not with his presence, but with his form of presence. And why are they thus troubled? "They thought they had seen a spirit." But say it had been what they mistook it for, a spirit, — why should they fear? Had they well considered, they had soon found that evil spirits are nevertheless present when they are not seen, — and harmful or malicious when they are present unseen: visibility adds nothing to their spite or mischief. And could their eyes have been opened, they had, with Elisha's servant, seen *more with* them *than against* them; a sure though invisible guard of more powerful spirits, and themselves under the protection of the God of spirits.

It was high time for the Saviour to speak; the disciples were almost lost

with fear. If his presence were fearful, yet his word was comfortable; "Be of good cheer, it is I;" — "I, your Lord and Master; I, the commander of winds and waters; I, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; I, the God of spirits." Let heaven be but as one scroll, and let it be written all over with titles, they cannot express more than, "It is I." O sweet and seasonable word of a gracious Saviour, able to calm all tempests, able to revive all hearts!

BISHOP HALL.

Peter showed here, what on other occasions appears to have been his natural character, — a mixture of boldness and weakness, of sincerity and irresolution. "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water." This was placing himself in a way of unnecessary trial, as when he followed Jesus into the high priest's palace, and mixed himself among his Master's bitterest enemies. Still, then, he showed the same earnest zeal, and there he showed the same courage and confidence which afterwards fitted him to be a main pillar of the infant church. Not being equally called for, it was followed by a check and a reproof; but it was in its nature the same faith as that which is so highly approved in Abraham.

"O the imperfect composition of the best saints on earth: as far from pure faith as from mere infidelity!" He was a portion of the same excellence, and the same weakness, which afterwards showed itself in a scene more resembling ordinary life. The same ardent zeal, which saith, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water," said also, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death." No doubt, Peter thought this and meant this, as sincerely as he intended to venture upon the waves. But, within a very few hours, "seeing the wind boisterous, he was afraid:" seeing his Master in the hands of his enemies, — seeing that he had no power to deliver himself, "he denied him, saying, I know him not."

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

It was between the hours of *three* and *six* in the *morning* that Jesus made this appearance to his disciples, "walking on the sea:" thus suspending the laws of gravitation was a proper manifestation of unlimited power. Jesus did this by his own power; therefore Jesus showed forth his Godhead. In this one miracle we may discover *three*: — 1. Though at a distance from his disciples, he *knew* their distress. 2. He found them out on the lake, and probably in the midst of darkness. 3. He *walked* upon the water. Job, speaking of those things whereby the omnipotence of God was demonstrated, says particularly, "He walketh upon the waves of the sea" (*Job* ix. 8); intimating that this was impossible to anything but *Omnipotence*.

"Immediately the ship was at the land." How far they were from the place at which they landed, when our Lord came to them, we know not: but the Evangelist seems to speak of their *sudden* arrival there as extraordinary and miraculous.

DR. A. CLARKE.

Our Lord having persisted in his zealous labours till the evening, put to

sea "even as he was in the ship," whence he had preached, and without any peculiar attention to his health, ease, or indulgence, after so great fatigues! — *Mark* iii. 1. 20. 31. 36. Such an example did he set us of enduring hardships, and avoiding all needless regard to ourselves, whilst employed in doing good to the souls of men!

Instead of the fair voyage, which probably they expected, they were overtaken with a terrible storm: so that the ship was speedily covered with the waves, and apparently ready to sink; yet amidst all this confusion and distress, Jesus lay fast asleep. His human nature, like ours in every thing but sin, was wearied, and he willingly yielded to sleep, foreseeing the storm, that his power might thus be more noticed. But the disciples, trembling lest they should be swallowed up by the waves, and having no resource but in his power, came and awoke him; saying, "Lord, save us, we perish." Considering all which they had seen of his power, this was comparatively weak faith; and their fears were evidences of much remaining unbelief. Having therefore first rebuked them, as men of "little faith (*Matt.* viii. 26), he next, with the authority of the Lord and Governor of the creation, rebuked the winds and waves, — as a master would rebuke a company of unruly servants; and at his omnipotent word, the winds suddenly ceased to blow, the tempestuous sea, contrary to its nature, became smooth, and a perfect calm succeeded. Thus the tempest which threatened their destruction was overruled, to the increase of their faith, and admiration of the majesty and power of their Lord!

Storms may indeed assail us, and our fears may be great; but faith will apply to him for help, and meet no disappointment. Even when he seems to slumber, he restrains the violence of the winds and waves, and the fury of wicked men and apostate spirits; and when he awakes for our help, he will turn all our terrors into adoring love and gratitude to him as the "Mighty God and the Prince of Heaven!" REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

Christ had given sailing orders to his disciples (*Matt.* viii. 18), that they should "depart to the other side" of the sea of Tiberias, into the country of Gadara, in the tribe of Gad, which lay east of Jordan: thither he would go, to rescue a poor creature that was possessed with *a legion of devils*, though he foresaw how he should be affronted there. He chose to cross the lake, that he might have occasion to manifest himself the God *of the sea* as well as of *the dry land;* and that *all power is his, both in heaven and in earth.* It is a comfort to those *who go down to the sea in ships*, and are often in perils there, to reflect that they have a Saviour to trust to and pray to, who knows what it is to be at sea, and to be in storms there.

"There arose a very great storm." Christ could have prevented this: but that would not have been so much for his glory and the confirmation of their faith, as their deliverance was. Christ would show, that those who are passing with him over the ocean of this world must expect storms.

Jesus Christ *was asleep* in this storm. We never read of Christ's sleeping but at this time: he was in watchings often, — continued all night in prayer to God. This was a sleep, not of security, like Jonah's in a storm,

but of holy serenity and dependance upon his Father. They awoke him with their prayers, "Lord, save us, we perish." Christ is a Prince and a Saviour! He rebuked the disciples, "Why are ye so fearful?" He did not chide them for disturbing him with their prayers, but for their fears. He then rebukes the wind, *and there was a great calm:* the former he did as the God of grace and the sovereign of the heart; this he did as the God of Nature. Moses commanded the waters with a rod; Joshua with the ark of the covenant; Elisha with the prophet's mantle; but Christ with a word. Ordinarily after a storm there is a prolonged agitation of the waters: but all the effects of it cease at the word of Christ. Great storms of doubt and fear in the soul under the power of the spirit of bondage end in a wonderful calm, created and spoken by the Spirit of adoption.

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

Our Saviour's disciples, in the storm, were distressed with the apprehension of immediate destruction, while their Master was asleep. What! could he be ignorant or regardless of the danger of his faithful attendants? No: but their beloved Master designed to try the strength of their confidence in him, and to show their security under his protection. They awoke him, and cried in terror and anguish, "Lord, save us, we perish." Jesus, reproved them sharply for their unbelief; and then, to encourage their unreserved reliance upon him in every future difficulty, and to demonstrate that all nature was at his command, he arose with a peculiar majesty, and spake the authoritative words, "PEACE, BE STILL:" the furious winds instantly ceased to blow, and the turbulent sea was calm. Such a grand display of his divine power astonished them: "the men marvelled." They ought, indeed, to have recollected that he was the God of the whole creation; and this very miracle might have led them to that conclusion. "O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them."—*Psal.* lxxxix. 8, 9. But so much darkness yet remained in their minds, that they had no clear or consistent views of the great mystery of godliness."

This distressed situation of the disciples is an apt emblem of the church and of many private Christians, in perilous circumstances. It is one principal part of the Redeemer's plan to exercise and prove our faith; and therefore he conducts us through various trials. He affords us his gracious presence; and while we pass over the tempestuous sea of life, we ought to be satisfied that he is in the vessel with us. "Where is our faith? Why are we so fearful?" Let us be ashamed of our doubtful and suspicious temper, and, with unshaken confidence, commit ourselves to the power and peace of this mighty God and Saviour! REV. THOMAS ROBINSON.

You will remember, that it was not the main ocean, but the Lake of Tiberias, on which they sailed: however, the painter is at liberty to make his sea as large as he pleases, and his storm as terrible as he can. See! amidst these horrible emotions, a *vessel* in all the extremity of *distress.* Perplexed, amazed, and at their wit's end, the disciples run to and fro;

they try every expedient, and find, to their inexpressible affliction, every expedient ineffectual. We cast our eye forward, and their Divine MASTER appears, sedately rising from a gentle slumber. He sees the perplexity and horror of his companions, without the least emotion of alarm. What composure in his mien! what dignity in his attitude! what majesty, sweetened with compassion, in his aspect! — such as could arise from no cause but a conscious and undoubted certainty that not one of the company should perish,—not a hair of their head be injured,—and, that all this mighty uproar of Nature should end in a demonstration of his *mightier* power, and a confirmation of his disciples' *faith!* He looks abroad into the mutinous sky, and the turbulent deep: — he waves, with an authoritative air, his sacred hand, and adds the great commanding word, "Peace, be still!". Do you inquire after the effect? Let Milton declare it:—

> Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
> Stood ruled.

This is expressed in another draught, where all is hushed; the tremendous agitation ceases, and the most profound tranquillity takes place. The water is smooth as glass; we have the picture of a perfect *calm:* and view those persons who, a little while ago, were in the wildest distraction, and in the jaws of ruin, surrounding their LORD as men alive from the dead! Their consternation is turned inward to wonder, and their pangs of fear into ecstasies of joy. They acknowledge the omnipotence and adore the goodness of JESUS.

The circumstances of this miracle, as related by the Evangelist, are truly wonderful, and to the last degree picturesque. "Master! Master! we perish!" How concise, how abrupt, and how ardent is this exclamation! —therefore how strongly significant of imminent danger, and of the utmost distress! They have not time to be explicit. A moment's delay may be fatal. What they utter is conciseness itself, and all rapidity.—*Luke* viii. 24. This is nature; this is the genuine language of the heart; this is true historic painting!

REV. J. HERVEY.

How great and glorious does our blessed Redeemer appear, as having all the elements at his command, and exercising his dominion over the winds and seas! He stills the very tempests when they roar, and *makes the storm a calm.—Psalm* cvii. 29. He silences at once the noise and fury of the tumultuous waves: and, in the midst of its confusion, says to the raging sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.— Job* xxxviii. 11. Who would not reverence and fear him? Who would not cheerfully commit themselves to him? Under such a protection, how courageously may his church ride through every storm, and weather every danger! Christ is still with her, and she is safe even while he may seem to be sleeping. Blessed Jesus! that power of thine which here commanded the tempest into a calm, can easily silence all our tumultuous passions, and reduce our souls to that blessed tranquillity, in which alone we can be capable of enjoying thee and ourselves.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS EXTIRPATION OF DISEASES.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.—*Isai.* xxxv. 5, 6.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and *healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease* among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.—*Matt.* iv. 23, 24.

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.—When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and came seeing. The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said,

He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.—*John* ix. 1-11.

And the disciples of John showed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus, answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.—*Luke* vii. 18, 22.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the whole world itself could not contain the books that should be written.—*John* xxi. 25.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SACRED NARRATIVE.

Christ having wrought miracles in his own name, proved that he possessed this power in himself as an inherent energy. But how superior is this power to all that can be boasted by the greatest men who have ever lived! What conqueror would not cheerfully barter all the power in which he glories, for the control of wounds and diseases, of winds and waves, of life and death? This power exhibited Christ in the midst of all his humiliation, as greater than any, and than all the children of Adam: and surrounded his character with a splendour becoming his mission. I need not illustrate how important, how necessary, this greatness was to Christ, as the "Mediator between God and man!" DR. DWIGHT.

Our Lord gave sight to the *blind*. He poured day upon those hopeless and benighted eyes, which had never been visited with the least dawning ray. The *dumb*, at his command, found a ready tongue, and burst into songs of praise. The *deaf* were all ear, and listened to the joyful sound of salvation. The *lame*, lame from their very birth, threw aside their

crutches, and, full of transport and exultation, leaped like the bounding roe. He restored *floridity* and *beauty* to the flesh, emaciated by consuming sickness, or encrusted with a loathsome leprosy. All manner of *diseases*, though blended with the earliest seeds of life, and riveted in the constitution by a long inveterate predominancy;—diseases that baffled the skill of the physician, and mocked the force of medicine;—*these* he cured, not by tedious applications, but in the twinkling of an eye; not by costly prescriptions, or painful operations, but by a *word* from his mouth, or a *touch* from his hand, nay, by the *fringe* of his garment, or the bare act of his will. Any *one* of these miracles had been enough to endear the character, and eternize the memory of another person. But they were *common* things, matters of *daily* occurrence with our Divine MASTER.

REV. J. HERVEY.

The man was *born blind:* the blind man *sat begging.*—The way is made; our Saviour addresses himself to the miracle; a miracle, not more in the thing done, than in the form of doing it. What must the beholders needs think, when they saw the clay upon the holes of his eyes? Is this the way to give either eyes or sight?

Purposely, did our Saviour make choice of such a subject for his miracle: a man so poor, so public. The glory of the work could not have reached so far, if it had been done to the wealthiest citizen of Jerusalem. It could not be, but that many eyes had been witnesses of this man's want of eyes. He sat begging at one of the temple gates. Not only all the city, but all the *country* must needs know him; as *thrice* a year they all came up to worship at Jerusalem. Besides his blindness, his trade made him remarkable; his importunity drawing the eyes of all passengers; not in an obscure village of Judea, but at the gate of the temple of Jerusalem!

How could the neighbours do less than ask where he was that had done so strange a cure? Now, as prejudiced against Christ, and partial to the Pharisees, they bring the late-blind man before those professed enemies unto Christ. Hear him stoutly defending that gracious Author of his cure, against the cavils of the malicious Pharisees: I see him, as a resolute confessor, suffering excommunication for the name of Christ, and maintaining the innocence and honour of so blessed a benefactor. I hear him read a Divinity lecture to them that sat in Moses' chair; and convincing them of blindness, who punished him for seeing! How can I but envy thee, O happy man, who, of a patient, provest an advocate for thy Saviour; whose gain of bodily sight made way for thy spiritual eyes; who hast lost a synagogue, and hast found heaven; who, being abandoned of sinners, art received of the Lord of Glory? BISHOP HALL.

"He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." This might almost have blinded a man that had sight. But what could it do towards curing the blind? God works either with or without means, and all the creatures are only that, which his almighty operation makes them.

"And said to him, Go wash at the pool of Siloam." Perhaps our Lord

intended to make the miracle more taken notice of: for a crowd of people would naturally gather round him, to observe the event of so strange a prescription. And it is exceeding probable, the guide who must have led him, in traversing a great part of the city, would mention the errand he was going upon, and so call those who saw him to a greater attention. From the fountain of Siloam, which was without the walls of Jerusalem, a little stream flowed into the city, and was received in a kind of basin, near the temple, and called, the Pool of Siloam, "Which is by interpretation, Sent." And so was a type of the Messiah, who was sent of God. "He went and washed, and came seeing." He believed, and obeyed, and found a blessing. Had he reasoned like Naaman, on the impropriety of the means, he had justly been left in darkness. Lord, may our proud hearts be subdued to the method of thy recovering grace! REV. J. WESLEY.

"The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down."—*Psal.* cxlvi. 8. That the Lord, of whom all these things are spoken, is the Messiah, or Jehovah incarnate, appears, as Dr. Hammond hath justly observed, from what is said of him in verse 8, "The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind;" the miracle of restoring sight to men born blind being one reserved for the Son of God to work, at his coming in the flesh. "Since the world began," saith the man to whom sight had been thus restored, "was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."—*John* ix. 32. This, therefore, was the first of those tokens given by Jesus to the disciples of John, whereby it might be known that he was the expected Christ; "Go and tell John the things which ye have heard and seen; the blind receive their sight," &c. But how did this evince him to be the Messiah? Plainly, because it had been foretold by the prophets, as in *Isai.* xxix. 18, xxxv. 5, xlii. 18, that Messiah, when he came, should give sight to the blind. Now, if one part of the Psalmist's description belongs to Christ, the other members of it must do so likewise, it being evident that the whole is spoken of the same person. He, therefore, is "the God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is:" and, upon his appearing among men in the body of our flesh, he showed himself possessed of power to relieve all the wants, corporal and spiritual, of poor lost mankind. When he rescued men from the bondage of Satan, he "executed judgment for the oppressed:" when he fed thousands by a miracle, or when he preached the word to such as desired to hear and receive it, he "gave food to the hungry:" when, by pardon and grace, he released those who were bound with the chains of their sins, he "loosed the prisoners:" when he poured light into the sightless eye-ball, or illuminated with saving knowledge the understanding of the ignorant, he "opened the eyes of the blind:" when he made the crooked woman straight, or rectified the obliquity of a depraved will, he "raised those that were bowed down." Happy the people of such a God! happy the subjects of such a King! Rejoice, and sing, and shout aloud: for lo, "The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD!" BISHOP HORNE.

"Why herein is a marvellous thing." As if he had said, *This is wonderful indeed!* Is it possible that such persons as you are, who pretend to know a true from a false prophet, cannot decide in a case so plain? Has not the man opened my eyes? Is not the miracle known to all the town, and could any one do it who was not endued with the power of God?

"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. Our Lord performed no surgical operation in this cure: the man was born blind, and he was restored to sight by the power of God. That there are cases, in which a person who was born blind may be restored to sight by *surgical means*, we know; but no such means were used by Christ: and it is worthy of remark, that from the foundation of the world, no person *born blind* had been restored to sight, even by surgical operation, till about the year of our Lord, 1728; when the celebrated Dr. Cheselden, by couching the eyes of a young man, fourteen years of age, who had been born blind, restored him to perfect soundness. This was the effect of well-directed surgery: that performed by Christ was by miracle. DR. ADAM CLARKE.

These three, the case of the man born blind, *John* ix. 1-7; the blind man of Bethsaida, *Mark* viii. 22-26; and the deaf man near the sea of Galilee, viii. 32-37; are the only instances where a *deliberate external application* is related to have been used, and in all these cases the reason for using it seems to have been *one and the same*, namely, *to convey to the individuals, on whom the miracles were performed, a clear assurance that Jesus was the person at whose command, and by whose agency the cure was wrought, and to enable them to state to others the grounds of this assurance fully and circumstantially.*

A blind man can know another only by the voice or the touch. The blind man near Bethsaida, our Lord led out of the town, remote from the crowd, that he might be sure of the person who spoke to or touched him; he then spat on his eyes, and laid his hands on him, and restored him to sight, though imperfectly; after that, he put his hand again upon his eyes, and he saw clearly. What mode could give him more assurance that the cure was wrought by the interposition of Jesus? The deaf man could judge of the intentions of another only by seeing what he does; him therefore our Lord took aside, that he might fix his attention to himself, and then he put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue, thus signifying to him that he intended to produce some change in those organs; he then looked up to heaven, at the same time speaking, to signify that the change would proceed from a Divine power, exercised at his interposition.

The very same purpose was equally answered by our Lord's application to the eyes of the man born blind. Immediately, on approaching our Saviour, after receiving his sight, he must have recognized him by his voice. Had the grounds of his assurance been less full and circumstantial, he never could have so unanswerably replied to the captious queries of the Pharisees.

These three men do not appear to have had any previous knowledge of

our Saviour's character. The man born blind, he healed without any solicitation. The blind man at Bethsaida, and the deaf man, were brought by their friends. When the two blind men at Capernaum, *Matt.* ix. 27-31, and the two others near Jericho, xx. 30, 34, applied to our Saviour, crying, "Son of David, have mercy upon us!" a less external application was sufficient; as they professed their belief, Jesus only required that their profession should be sincere, "Believe ye," said he, "that I have power to do this? they said, Yea, Lord: then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you; and their eyes were opened."

These incidents display the miraculous nature of the facts, and the admirable propriety of our Lord's conduct in every circumstance, displaying the sobriety and dignity becoming his Divine character. DR. GRAVES.

"Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.—*John* iv. 48. Dumb the father stood in apprehension; but nature triumphed over his fears; and again he urges his suit: "The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down, ere my child die!" Here is *importunity!* He would not leave the Saviour till he had obtained his request. He could not take a denial. It was his last resource. For a moment, the answer of Jesus staggers him. For a moment, and only for a moment, he doubts whether he must return home. Home! His dying child rises before his eyes; he hears again all his groans; he sees life quivering upon his lips; and he reiterates his plea, with renewed earnestness. Here is *perseverance!* The good Physician saw and pitied the agony of his soul. "Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him; and he went his way."

"Thy son liveth!" What notes ever sounded half so sweet in a mortal ear! Not the cry of the infant Isaac in the ears of Sarah; nor the lisping of Samuel in the ears of Hannah. Not more sweet did the voice of Joseph sound in the ears of Israel, after an absence of twenty years, and when he received him again, as it were from the dead. "Thy son liveth!" In a moment, a mountain of anguish removes from his heart. "And as he was going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth! Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they said unto him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed and his whole house." "The *fever left* him!" it was no regular abatement of the disorder: it was a sudden transition from the borders of the grave to perfect soundness. The faith of the father, built upon evidence so incontrovertible, respected not merely the miracle which he had witnessed, but the person, character, and glory of the Saviour; and his family participated his joy. Apply this affecting and encouraging subject, ye parents, who are weeping over your children. Do not despair. While you see traces of disease on their countenances, spread their case before this great Physician! DR. COLLYER.

"Great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were

lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them. And they glorified the God of Israel."—*Matt.* xv. 30, 31. With what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded! Let us pause a little, and endeavour to paint him to our imagination, on this mountain, where the astonished multitudes so justly extolled all these mingled wonders of power and grace. Let us reflect upon the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, the deaf hearing, and the blind seeing, that with them we may glorify the God of Israel!

But who can describe the sentiments of these happy creatures, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves, in a moment, restored beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond all the prospects of hope! With what pleasure did the ear which had just been opened, listen to the pleasing accents of his instructive tongue! How did the lame leap around him for joy! and the maimed extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgments of his new-creating power! While the voice of the dumb sang forth his praises in sounds before unknown; and the eye of the blind checked the curiosity which would have prompted it to range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature, to fix its rapturous regard on the gracious countenance of him that had given it the day! Let us further reflect, with what correspondent pleasure must our Lord survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his benevolent heart took its share in all the delight which he gave! These trophies of his greatness, how unlike to those of the field, the monuments of desolation and slaughter! DR. DODDRIDGE.

Suppose that a learned heathen writer, who lived within sixty years of our Saviour's crucifixion, after having shown that false miracles were wrought in obscurity, and before few or no witnesses, speaking of those which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following passage:—"The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous for they were true; both those that were healed, and those that were raised from the dead; who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards; not only whilst he dwelled on this earth, but also after his departure, and for a good while after it, insomuch, that some of them have reached to our times,—"

I dare say you would look upon this as a glorious attestation for the cause of Christianity, had it come from the hand of a famous Athenian philosopher. These fore-mentioned words, however, are actually the words of one who lived about sixty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, and was a famous philosopher of Athens. This person, Quadratus, embraced Christianity, and died a martyr! RT. HON. J. ADDISON.

There were always very many amongst the worshippers of Christ who were of good judgment, and of no small learning; such as, not to mention Jews, Sergius the president of Cyprus (*Acts* xiii. 12), Dionysius the Areopagite (xvii. 34), Polycarp, Justin, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Origen, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and others; who being such men, why they

should themselves be worshippers of a man that was put to an ignominious death, especially when almost all of them were brought up in other religions, and there was neither honour nor profit to be had by the Christian religion. There can be no reason given but this one; that upon a diligent inquiry, such as becomes prudent men to make, in a matter of the highest concern to them, they found that the report which was spread abroad, concerning the miracles that were done by him, was true, and founded upon sufficient testimony; such as healing sore diseases, and those of a long continuance, only by a word, and this publicly; restoring sight to him that was born blind; increasing bread for the feeding of many thousands, who were all witnesses of it; restoring the dead to life again, and many others such like. Which report had so certain and undoubted a foundation, that neither Celsus nor Julian, when they wrote against the Christians, dared to deny that some miracles were done by Christ: the Hebrews also confess it openly in the books of the Talmud. HUGO GROTIUS.

The *number* of Christ's miracles was very great. If we consider only those which are recorded *at large*, they are about *forty*; but it is evident that they must have been beyond all number.

There was a great *variety* of Christ's miracles. It was the *number* and *variety* of the miracles of Moses, which at length convinced the Egyptian magicians that the power by which he wrought them was Divine. But a variety of effects, all mutually distinguished, and each perfect in each kind, suggests the idea of a perfect agent, powerful and designing, employed in producing them. And this is the case with the miracles of Christ: for, not one disease only, but *all* are subject to the power of Christ and his apostles: even death,—the last enemy,—gives up his prey at their command, especially at the command of Christ. We behold him, giving *sight* to the *born-blind*; making those who *wanted a limb*, perfect; those who were *bowed double*, straight; those who *shook* with *palsy*, robust; nerving the *withered* arm with *strength*; restoring the *insane* and *demoniacs* to *reason*; and raising the dead to life. That great miracle of raising the dead, in particular, Christ performed no less than *four* times; once on the ruler's daughter, just *after* she had expired; again, on the widow's son as he was carried on his bier to be interred; a *third* time, on Lazarus, when he had lain in his grave *four* days; and lastly,—the greatest instance of all,—in himself. And the *design* was every way worthy of their Almighty Author! REV. T. H. HORNE.

Whose heart is so insensible as not to feel devout pleasure in the history of these miracles of our Lord, though the subjects on which they were wrought are long since mouldering in the dust! But let us further recollect, that our Divine Leader has other yet more noble and more permanent trophies,—those immortal spirits which he has redeemed, and sanctified, and saved! So may our transported souls, O blessed Jesus, in the consciousness of health, vigour, and salvation, behold thee as our Deliverer! DR. DODDRIDGE.

CHRIST'S MIRACULOUS EJECTION OF DEVILS.

Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.—*Job.* i. 9-12.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.—*Rev.* xx. 1-2.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

AND they came over the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.) And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much, that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding.

And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it, told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel. —*Mark* v. 1-20. See *Matt.* viii. 28, 34.—*Luke* viii. 27-39.

And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David! my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.—*Matt.* xv. 22, 28. See *Mark* vii. 25, 30.

SACRED NARRATIVE.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."—*Acts* x. 38. Intimating to us by this instance of his doing good, that he who took so much pains to rescue men's bodies from the power of the devil, would not let their souls remain under his tyranny.

There was brought to our Saviour "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him." Upon this "the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?" that is the Messias. The Phari-

sees, hearing this, with great bitterness and contempt, said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."—*Matt.* xii. 22, 24. Upon this our Saviour asks, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges:" (that is, This may be sufficient to convince you of malice to me) "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you;" that is the Messiah is come, because he wrought these and other miracles to prove that he was the Messias. And the Saviour adds, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." So that the Pharisees are the persons charged with this sin or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It was plainly this, that when he cast out devils by the Spirit of God, they said he did it by the power of the devil; they maliciously ascribed these works of the Holy Ghost to the devil! ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

Demons of Holy Writ are malignant spirits. We are not informed particularly about their origin or destiny; but we find them represented as *unclean spirits*, and in league with the devil, as the subjects of his dominion, and the instruments of his will. But some writers contend that the demoniacs of the New Testament were only diseased persons: madness and epilepsy being ascribed by the Jews to the agency of evil spirits; and that this notion was adopted by our Lord and his apostles.

Christ and his apostles, however, represent the demons as speaking, and reasoning, as having inclinations and aversions peculiar to themselves, and distinct from those of the person who is the subject of the possession: they tell us of one unhappy sufferer vexed with many devils; and in the case of the demoniac of Gadara, they assure us that the devils were "cast out" of the man, and were permitted, at their own request, to "enter into" a herd of swine, and that immediately the herd ran violently down a steep place, and were drowned in the sea. Who ever heard of *swine* afflicted with madness as a natural disease? As various instances are recorded in Scripture, might we not expect, if possessions were nothing more than diseases, that Christ himself would have declared, in one unequivocal affirmation, or in some intelligible way, the exact truth of the case? Or, at all events, when the Holy Ghost had descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and when a full disclosure of the revelation was made, might it not reasonably have been rectified? What conceivable motive could influence our Saviour, or his apostles, to sanction the delusion of the multitude? And does it not strike at the root of the Christian religion itself, to have it thought, for a single moment, that its "Author and Finisher," who came to enlighten and to reform the world, should have not only countenanced, but confirmed an opinion which he knew to be "the reverse of the truth?"

Let us then beware how we relinquish the literal sense of Holy Writ, in search of allegorical interpretations. It is evident that the devil and his angels, according to all that we can learn of them in the sacred books,

are real beings; that the demons of the New Testament are malignant spirits; and that they act upon the same principles, and even under the authority of Satan himself, called Beelzebub, and the prince of the devils. And it is on this supposition alone that we can explain the language of Christ in that remarkable declaration which he made to the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, *Matt.* xii. 24-26:—"The Pharisees heard it, and they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how shall his kingdom stand?"

REV. RICHARD WATSON.

There is everywhere a plain distinction made between *common diseases* and *demoniacal possessions*, which shows that they are totally different things. In the *fourth* chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, where the very first mention is made of these possessions, it is said that our Lord's fame went throughout all Syria, and that they brought unto him "all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments," and those "which were possessed with devils," and he healed them. Here those that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those possessed with devils, are mentioned as distinct and separate persons: a plain proof that the demoniacal possessions were not natural diseases: and the very same distinction is made in several passages of Holy Writ. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the demoniacs were persons really possessed with evil spirits; and although it may appear strange to us, yet we find from Josephus and other historians, that it was in those times no uncommon case.

BISHOP PORTEUS.

Gadara. The account given of the habitation of the demoniacs, from whom the legion of devils was cast out here, struck us very forcibly, while we were ourselves wandering among rugged mountains, and surrounded by tombs, still used as habitations by individuals and whole families of those residing there. A finer subject for a masterly expression of the passions of madness in all their violence, contrasted with the serenity of benevolence and virtue in him who went about doing good, could hardly be chosen by the pencil of an artist; and a faithful delineation of the rugged and wild majesty of the mountain scenery here on the one hand, with the still calm of the water of the lake on the other, would give an additional charm to the picture.

MR. BUCKINGHAM.

"Gadarenes." The Gadarenes were included within the limits of the Gergesenes, Dr. Lightfoot supposes that, of the *two* demoniacs mentioned *Matt.* viii. 28, one was of Gadara, and consequently a *heathen*, the other was a Gergesenian, and consequently a *Jew;* and he thinks that Mark and Luke mention the Gadarene demoniac, because his case was a singular one being the only heathen cured by our Lord, except the daughter of the Syrophenician woman.

"Bound with fetters and chains." His strength, it appears, was *supernatural*, no kind of chains being strong enough to confine him. With several, this man would have passed for an *outrageous madman*, and diabolical influence be entirely left out of the question; but it is the prerogative of the *inspired* penman only, to enter into the *nature* and *causes* of things: and how strange is it, that because men cannot see as far as the Spirit of God does, therefore they deny his testimony!

"Crying, and cutting himself with stones." In this person's case, we see a specimen of what Satan *could do* in *all* the wicked, if God should permit him; but even the devil himself has his *chain;* and he who often *binds* others, is *always* bound himself. DR. A. CLARKE.

This history, more fully than any other, acquaints us with the power of those evil spirits which Christ Jesus came to subdue. Jesus had begun his ministry by overcoming Satan; he proceeds to show that the Son of God was come, and for what purpose he was come, by subduing those inferior spirits, who at this period seem especially to have exerted their malevolent power. They knew, it appears, who was appointed to restrain them and break their dominion. They cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" Happily for the world, for this purpose he came: "for this was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." And an awful subject of thought is opened to us in the words that follow, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" This shows a fearful expectation of wrath; of the judgment awaiting them, of which Peter speaks, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."—2 *Pet.* ii. 4.

"The devils besought him, Suffer us to go into the herd of swine." Without permission they could do nothing. This agrees with what we read in Job's history, "The LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand."—*Job* i. 12. And again, "the LORD said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand: but save his life."—ii. 6.

The Jews were forbidden to eat the flesh of swine, *Deut.* xiv. 8: therefore, those who kept them were not obedient to the law; and this destruction of their herd may have been intended as a punishment. But the great purpose of the whole was, no doubt, to show the dominion of Jesus over the spiritual world. It has been supposed, that the power of devils was allowed to be more evidently exerted at the period of our Lord's ministry than at any other time before or since, in order that his own superior power, and universal sovereignty, might appear. So by the power at this time evidently exercised by unclean spirits, the greater power of him, who "with authority commanded them, and they obeyed him," was displayed in the sight of all who witnessed this miracle.

Another truth appears which well deserves attention,—the miserable end to which those bring themselves who are given up to the dominion of evil spirits. We are well assured that none are so given up, till they have rejected all means of grace. But do we not sometimes see sinners run

headlong upon their own destruction,—Pharaoh, for instance. This is an extraordinary case; but much of the same nature may be traced in the life and death of many heinous sinners. The "unclean spirit goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." "Be wise therefore." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the right way." Make him your friend, who is able to restrain and bind the enemy of your souls. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!"

BISHOP J. B. SUMNER.

From the remarkable story which is here before us, we must surely see the most apparent reason to adore the good providence of God, which restrains the malignant spirits of hell: that all their fury and rage is under a Divine control! The unhappy creature whose state is here described in such lively colours, is an affecting emblem of those who are in a spiritual sense under the power of Satan. Thus do they break asunder the bonds of reason and gratitude, and sometimes of authority, and even of shame. Human attempts to moderate and reform them may be vain; but let us remember that the Almighty Saviour has a voice which can put this worst kind of demon to flight, so as to place them at his feet in a holy composure, and in calm rational attention.

We see here a legion of devils trembling before the Son of God, confessing his superior power, howling as it were in their chains, and entreating the delay of their torments. And can human pride stand before him? Happy souls that are listed under his banners! They shall share the victories of the great Captain of their salvation! But oh, how stupid were these Gadarenes, who preferred their swine to their souls, and besought him to depart out of their coasts, whose presence was their defence and their glory! May Divine grace preserve us from a temper like theirs! And may those of us who have experienced the restoring power of Christ, be engaged to adhere to our great Benefactor!

DR. DODDRIDGE.

"Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils."—*Luke* viii. 2. Mary Magdalene is commonly thought to have been a *prostitute* before she came to the knowledge of Christ, and then to have been a remarkable penitent. So *historians* and *painters* represent her; but neither from this passage, nor from any other of the New Testament, can such a supposition be legitimately drawn. She is here represented as one who had been possessed with *seven demons;* and as one among other women who had been healed by Christ of *evil* (or *wicked*) *spirits and infirmities.* As well might *Joanna* and *Susanna*, mentioned verse 3, come in for a share of the censure as this Mary Magdalene; for they seem to have been dispossessed likewise by Jesus, according to Luke's account of them. They had all had infirmities, of what sort it is not said, and those infirmities were occasioned by evil spirits within them, and Jesus had healed them all: but *Mary Magdalene*, by her behaviour, and constant attendance on Jesus in his life-time, at his crucifixion, and at his grave, seems to have exceeded all the other women in respect to his person.

BISHOP PEARCE.

In what way *angels* became *demons*, it does not become us to determine. The two leading references to this mysterious event, are in the second epistle of Peter, and the general epistle of Jude. Our Lord himself seems to allude to the fact, when he says to the Jews who resisted his doctrines and mission, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and *abode not in the truth*, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." While a reference appears to be made to a departure from his original state, when it is said, he *abode* not in the truth—the declaration, that he was "a murderer from the beginning," can be understood, as we conceive, to refer only to those wiles by which he allured man from his original innocence, and with it destroyed his peace, and involved his posterity in ruin.

The language of the Scriptures, on the agency of the devil on the human mind, is explicit: the name Satan signifies "an adversary," "an accuser." He is described as a real being, when Jesus says, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself." He is called, "the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air." We are charged, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He is exhibited under various images—a serpent—*the old* serpent—a roaring and devouring lion. It is promised, "the Lord God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly." The world of punishment, is called, a fire "prepared for the devil and his angels." Cain was said to be "of that wicked one," because he slew his brother. Jesus charged the Jews with a resemblance to this evil spirit. He is said to "lie in wait to deceive." He is described as having access to the human mind; and endeavouring, by all possible means, to allure, or to alarm; to tempt, or to terrify. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not:"—there can be no doubt, from the connection of this passage, that the reference was to that future act of the disciple—the denial of his Master. When Peter charged Ananias with deliberate falsehood, he said, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie against the Holy Ghost?" and when Judas betrayed his Lord, before he left the table where he had eaten with Jesus, it is said, that "Satan entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot."

In certain instances of what is usually called demoniacal possessions, it does not appear that the demoniac was afflicted with any bodily disease whatever. Such were the Gadarene demoniacs. The evangelists carefully distinguish between diseases of every description and possessions. It is impossible to suppose a maniac capable of knowing the Saviour, and of bearing such a testimony to his character and mission, at a time when he had not been heard of by them as the Messiah. We appeal to every one who has carefully perused the history of the Gospels.

Some reasons may be assigned for possessions in the days of our Lord, arising from the nature of his mission. He was said to be "manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." Such possessions, allowed at that particular time, proved the nature and malice of the adversary, and the superiority and mission of the Saviour. He produced, in his miraculous

agency, successive evidences of his power over disease, and over death: it was of importance that he should furnish some marks of his victory over "him that had the power of death," the grand adversary. Those who beheld the expulsion of demons from the bodies of mankind, would more readily receive him, as the deliverer destined to bruise the head of the serpent; and believe him, when he pronounced the forgiveness of sin. With what zeal would his apostles go forth to contend against an enemy thus early defeated, and whose kingdom had been already shaken! Thus, before he finally subdued these spirits of darkness on the cross, even in the days of his pilgrimage, he "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly!"

DR. COLLYER.

"He went about doing good."

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